EFFECTIVE PREACHING

EDITED BY

G. BROMLEY OXNAM

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EFFECTIVE PREACHING

A Series of Lectures Delivered Before the Boston University School of Theology October 15, 16, and 17, 1928

Edited by

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THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO

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Printed in the United States of America

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO
HENRY HITT CRANE AND
WALTER JOHN SHERMAN
EFFECTIVE PREACHERS OF THE
GOSPEL OF CHRIST

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FOREWORD

By G. Bromley Oxnam

"Does the preacher aim at leading his hearers to solve their felt problems, or to ignore them, divert attention from them, acquire attitudes that will keep them out of the focus of vision?" Such are the queries raised by the educator who seeks to test the effectiveness of preaching. The expert in pedagogy presses the question further and asks, "Is the preacher conscious primarily of the subject or of the object of his preaching; does he have the subject-matter attitude toward the pulpit curriculum or is subject matter supplied to meet needs made explicit in the hearer's experience?"

In his paper "Some Educational Tests of Preaching," Ray Gibbons declares, "The first test is whether the preaching becomes more and more necessary or less and less. Preaching, like adult guidance of the child, should more and more free the individual and the group so that they will have within themselves the methods and the resources for further growth. The fond parent who increases the dependency of the child is doing it positive harm. The preacher who makes his people increasingly dependent on himself for ideas, 'inspiration' and solutions is doing no less damage." It is in this connection that the question is asked, "Does the preacher aim to persuade

people to think for themselves, or would he have them accept formulas worked out by others?" In this hour of educational measurement, it is quite natural that the educator should ask, "Has the preacher any means of measuring the result of his preaching?"

E. C. Lindeman, writing upon the theme "Is Preaching a Valid Method?" insists that "preaching is, in fact, an awkward and anomalous instrument for an age which has set forth on the adventurous journey of life with the assumption that it can do without external authority . . . Preaching, as a method for influencing conduct, is both undemocratic and unscientific."[1] What does this mean? Simply that the expert in pedagogy is scrutinizing homiletical theory and seriously questioning it from the standpoint of its validity as an educational method.

Contemporary preaching, likewise, faces criticism from other sources. This criticism differs from the close investigation of the educationist, since it is unscientific. It is a criticism that, daggerlike, is plunged into the back of the prophet by revolutionaries who would destroy the present scheme of things and by reactionaries who would maintain the *status quo* regardless of ethical considerations. A recent communist poster, in fearful caricature, depicts its criticism of the preacher. The poster bears the title "Christ Triumphant." It is not a portrayal of the triumphal entry, but is

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a revelation of the communist notion of both religion and the preacher. In the center of the poster is a golden cross. It is carried by the poor, the worker, the down-trodden, the men and women of whom Masefield sings. The cross-carriers are harnessed and the reins lead to the pudgy hands of a fat, silk-hatted person, who sits upon a throne of gold and rides the cross as if it were a carriage. The rider is none other than Capitalism. But why call the picture "Christ Triumphant"? The answer is found when the eye notes the right hand side of the poster and beholds the Christ an accomplice in fact, halo-clad, leading the weary folk who bear the capitalist-ridden cross of gold. For the communist, the preacher is a nonproducer, and in Russia is as such disfranchised. Such is the sorry dictum of the gentlemen upon the preacher's left. Upon his right, he is beset by the untutored reactionary, who declares that the preachers have gone Bolshevik. The reactionary publishes no posters. He circulates a black list. The preacher thus, who decries revolution, but who insists upon the proclamation and practice of the ethical ideal, finds his preaching methods questioned by the educationist and his message attacked by revolutionary and reactionary alike.

The social worker, trained in accurate case work, smiles somewhat derisively when the preacher announces "A Confessional." Simple-minded folks who wish intellectual problems solved

by reference to some creedal statement insist that the preacher no longer proclaims a spiritual message. They will not go with the preacher who is honest in his search for reality. They call for "the pure gospel." The college sophomore, who has completed his first course in psychology, in a spirit of patronizing sympathy, wonders what the poor preacher can do with his "transforming gospel" in the light of the "facts of behaviorism." Many a layman who has stammered through an uninteresting speech composed of ancient illustrations and trite remarks declares, when referring to his preacher, "He is a splendid fellow, but he cannot preach."

The preacher is under fire. Recognizing both the pertinence and the impertinence of these contentions, the faculty of the Boston University School of Theology, whose task it is to train ministers for the coming generation, turned its attention to a serious consideration of this problem. They asked, "Is preaching an effective means of influencing human behavior?"

It was at once evident that effective preaching is done by numerous preachers throughout the land. Without question, there are preachers whose work will stand the closest of pedagogical scrutiny. There are preachers who are doing as much to bring in the new social order as any social worker, labor leader, or business genius of social vision. Great universities are establishing offices known as Dean of Religion and are calling

outstanding clergymen to such positions. Spiritual messages that grip the souls of men are being proclaimed. Intelligent laymen throng the auditorium of many a church to hear preachers who can preach. It is apparent that America possesses effective preachers. Since there are men who preach effectively, it was believed that a conference wherein such men would address themselves to the problem of effective preaching would give students a laboratory opportunity to consider not alone the message of the effective preacher, but the method revealed by that preacher in action. It was believed that a careful analysis of such facts as personality, homiletical methods and objectives might enable the students to measure the factors of effective preaching. To that end, a conference was organized and, on October 15, 16, and 17, 1928, the first of what is hoped to be an annual "Conference on Preaching" was held in the chapel of the Boston University School of Theology. There was an instant demand for the publication of the lectures, since it was felt that the material possessed intrinsic worth that should be shared with a larger group than that assembled at the conference. It must be borne in mind that the endeavor to analyze effective preaching required the presence of the preacher himself. His personality is lacking in the printed lecture. The modulation of voice, the flash of the eye, and the striking gesture are absent, but the thought is present and the method of address available.

All of the lectures given at the conference appear save three. Henry Sloane Coffin's "The Preaching of the Cross" will appear in a forthcoming volume from Doctor Coffin's pen. Charles E. Jefferson delivered two lectures, "The Place of the Preacher" and "The Kind of Preacher the World Needs To-day," the former appearing in this volume. S. Parkes Cadman spoke upon "The Preacher's Three-Fold Approach to Christ." This lecture will appear in a book that will come from the press shortly. In his second appearance, Doctor Cadman answered questions. The questions and answers appear in this volume.

Can preaching be made effective? The answer will be found by studying the work of men who have proved it valid, ascertaining the principles of effective preaching and laying hold upon them to the end that the gospel message may reach and remotivate a twentieth-century world.

G. Bromley Oxnam.

PRAYER

By Daniel L. Marsh

O Lord God, our heavenly Father, we are thankful that we are allowed of thee to be put in trust with the gospel. It is because we feel the seriousness of this sacred trust that this conference on preaching has been called. Our aim is to please thee, the Searcher of hearts. Therefore, our teaching cannot be based on vain notions, nor can we countenance insincere purposes and means.

We thank thee for those who have made this conference possible, and for the superb leadership given to it. We thank thee for Boston University, and bless thy Name for the contributions made to humane progress by all of its colleges and schools. Especially just now do our hearts expand with gratitude for the Boston University School of Theology, under whose auspices this conference is held. We thank thee that day after day throughout the year, and year after year throughout its history, this school has been training and equipping young men for the gospel ministry, and sending them out into the world consecrated to the glorification of right thinking and right living.

And now, as we start another year with this wonderful conference on preaching, we pray that thou wilt bless and brighten every hour. Speak to our minds and hearts through these servants

of thine. As a result of this conference, may reason be refined, judgment clarified, imagination winged, faith strengthened, and zeal inspired. May we not only learn from these men who speak, but may we also be taught of thee. Grant that our mystical sense of sight may be so sharpened that we can see the vision splendid, and translate it into life; our mystical sense of hearing made so acute that we can hear the Voice from above, and tell to others the things that we have heard; our mystical sense of touch made so delicate that we can feel thee near to comfort and strengthen us every hour of the way.

As a result of this conference, may our students enter upon their great adventure with zest, lured on by the sense of reality, forming such mental habits as will make them experts in the great business of preaching. Give to their message the proper objectives and the right spiritual aspects. Make them the kind of preachers the world needs to-day. Help them so to preach the Word and to live it that they will ever exalt the cross. Clothed with the authority of their high calling, may they enter with constructive power not only into the affairs of their own parishes, but also into world affairs. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

THE LECTURES PRESENTED IN THIS VOLUME WERE DELIVERED BY

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I

REALITY IN PREACHING

By Halford E. Luccock

A minister whom I used to know rather well once said that when one was not exactly sure what he was going to say, he should choose a large subject so that anything which he could possibly think of would come in logically under the theme. I did not choose this topic, but I do not see how anything could be phrased which would be more spacious and roomy.

Principal P. T. Forsyth has said that "the cure for dullness in the pulpit is not brilliance, but reality." That it is a great word to keep in front of your eyes, especially at a time when we are slain all day long by the assertion, usually given with the bright and sparkling air of having made a fresh contribution to the world's wisdom, that preaching is dull. We have had a whole shelf full of patent medicine cures for pulpit dullness which are worse than the original disease. The result has been not a cure, but a complication.

This word "reality" spreads out like the sky to cover almost everything in preaching all the way from a preacher's choice of adjectives and inflection of the voice to the central integrity of a man's life.

It is a commonplace to say that our age cries out for reality. One of its primary faiths is in the method of experimental demonstration. Mr. H. W. Van Loon in his *Story of America* pictures vividly and rather accurately the mood of a large section of our population to-day. He describes showing a watch to a small four-year-old boy. He dangled the watch in front of the youngster's eyes and said to him: "See, pretty!" The youngster reached out his fist and grabbed the watch and said: "Give it to me; I want to see if it really works." That is the mood uppermost to-day—"I want to see if it works." Men are no longer interested in a merely pretty religion; they want something that can actually be demonstrated. If we cannot show that our Christian faith really works for the enrichment, the unifying and the energizing of life, it may be as pretty as a gorgeous sunset and yet have no real grip on lives.

It is a tragedy that in an age which cries out wistfully for great preaching, not great in eloquence or brilliance, but great in the deeper sense being the experience and utterance of realities, that there are so many quack substitutes in the pulpit of one kind and another. There are a good many idolatries of lesser gods and a pagan trust in externalities.

The story in the Gospels of the periodic bubbling of the pool of Bethesda is a rather startling parallel for some aspects of our church life to-day. Around that pool in the gospel story there was a company

of invalids waiting for the water to bubble, thinking that they could jump into the midst of the disturbance and be saved. Whatever else there is in that story—and there is much else—there is for one thing a picture of a group of sickly and impotent folk depending for their cure on some outward commotion rather than inward renewal. Many men in the pulpit seem to be in the same situation. They seem at times to give the impression that they have traded a faith in the living God for a faith in bubbles. Some new interest comes along, some popular craze takes hold of the public. There is some new disturbance in the pool of the world's life, and the preacher says: "Lo here! We will jump into the midst of this and be saved."

We saw a striking instance of this pathetic and deluded opportunism at the beginning of the Great War. Here was the most volcanic bubbling in centuries. It disturbed the world's life as nothing ever had before. Many in the church actually hailed this disturbance as something which could be used to the furtherance of religion and the church. During the early days of the war they saw churches which have been half empty become filled with worshipers. They said: "Here is something that will save us. We will jump into this and it will give new life to religion." The picture which Mr. E. C. Montague gives in his novel, *Right off the Map*, of the eloquent and militaristic Bishop does not exaggerate very much the mental process of many preachers in those days. Mr.

Montague pictures the Bishop speaking at the outbreak of war. He says that the Bishop's voice was one of the finest wind instruments in the world. This Bishop gives elaborate thanks for the blessing which the war has brought to the moral and spiritual life of the nation. But the bubbles burst, the war has come and gone. There probably remains no one in the world so befuddled as to regard the war as an ethical or religious asset. War left what it always leaves: blight, desolation, and death. Those who hoped that the ills of the church would be cured by it are left with the Old Testament lament: "The harvest is gone, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

At the present time the most frantic bubbling of the pool in the nation's life is in politics, and thousands of ministers are just like the folks around the edge of the bubbling pool of Bethesda. They say, inwardly at least: "Here is the big excitement; let us put the church in the middle of it. In that way our limbs which have been paralyzed will leap again." So we have a large number of pulpits which have become partisan platforms. We have still to face the terrific liabilities which lie ahead before the church as the result of that procedure. Unquestionably, the temporary kindling of interest has been achieved. The price which will yet have to be paid in the days to come has not been figured up.

So it is with other new interests which come into the foreground of the church's life. The danger

is that of expecting far more than such interests can possibly do in accomplishing the vital work of the church. Take the Community Church idea, for instance. That very word "Community" has been hailed and used as though it were a magic formula. We used to hear of the lady who comforted her soul with that blessed word, "Mesopotamia." Now, in many quarters the blessed word is "Community." Some ministers seem to think that all one needs to do to rid the church of all the ills which it is heir to is to baptize it a "Community Church." I have been an attendant at a community church for several years. In that time it has had about all the common diseases of a church. It has had infantile paralysis; it has had sleeping sickness; it has had pernicious anemia. Now it is in the grip of a strange affliction, which the hopeful pastor diagnoses as growing pains. The fact that it is labeled "Community Church," and actually is one, has not served as a magic formula to ward off the seven devils so liable to attack any church.

The same situation has been true in some quarters of religious education. Impossible hopes have been raised in many hearts over what religious education could do. It has been hailed not for what it is—an indispensable agency for molding the mind of people after the mind of Christ—but as a kind of panacea. Its ardent devotees have looked down with a pitying glance on other agencies for the promotion of religion.

I do not know how high Mount Everest is, but I am quite sure that it is much below that lofty pinnacle from which some religious educators look down in contempt on the obsolete and necromantic process known as preaching. (The foregoing sentence is an example of the "strength of understatement" described by Dean Sperry in his address!)

Then there is in many quarters a sort of superstitious faith in mere motion as a cure for the weakness of spiritual life. Congregations are plunged into endless and fussy rounds of activity without much thorough-going thought as to the purpose and end of this activity. The church of Saint Peter has become the church of Saint Vitus. Mr. A. A. Milne, whose little classic of childhood, *When We Were Very Young* is coming to take the place which *Alice in Wonderland* has occupied as a source of philosophic observations on life, has pictured the predicament of many preachers in the lines which he has put into the mouth of a small child who can't determine whether he is a muffin man, or a postman, or a "tram." He just knows that he goes round and round and round. That states it exactly. A great many preachers are not sure exactly what they are trying to do, yet round about, and round about on an endless merry-go-round of recurring activities they go. As someone has said, one article in the creed of many churches must be, "I believe in the commotion of saints."

Against all this frantic opportunism there should be placed that great word of Emerson: "Believe in magnetism, not in needles." The man at the pool was not saved by outward disturbance, but by the advent of a Person. It is nothing less than the advent of Jesus Christ into our world and message which will give healing and saving power.

I

Any reality in preaching must issue from a living experience of God in Jesus Christ. We will not dwell on this, for it might seem that this would go without saying. And yet it can not go without saying. James M. Barrie, in his play *What Every Woman Knows*, says of charm in a woman that if she has it, she does not need anything else, but if she does not have it, nothing else will do her any good. Now, something like that is to be said of a preacher's own religious experience. If he has it, he needs, of course, a good deal else; but this much at least is true, that if he does not have it, nothing else will do him any good. Emil Ludwig, discussing the writing of biography, recently said that, if you are to make a subject live, you must live with him, think with him, eat with him. "Unless you have," says Ludwig, "a certain mad, furious and passionate relationship to your subject, you can never make him live in the minds of others." Our task as preachers is to make Jesus live in the minds and hearts of men. These three adjectives which Ludwig uses are worth careful thought.

They seem strange ones to use, almost weird. They are good words to hold in front of us while we ask ourselves, Would anyone imagine that we had a furious relationship to Jesus? Those words of Ludwig's, by a wholly unintentional coincidence, happen to be just the ones which were used of the great disciples of Jesus. "Paul, thou art beside thyself," cried Festus, paying a tribute to the Christ-centered life, which has been re-echoed during the centuries. Again and again observers of George Whitefield said, "He was in a frenzy." Zinzendorf wrote of himself: "I have one passion —it is HE."

Our danger is that we may either start without that passionate relationship or may lose it by the way. There is a keen insight into the processes of the mind in Paul's fear, "lest having preached to others, I myself become a castaway." The real danger is not that we may become castaways in spite of having preached to others, but just *because* of it. Doctor Coffin, in his book *What to Preach,* has pictured that spiritual risk of the minister very vividly in saying that we are in danger of getting into the position of a train caller at a railroad depot—eternally directing people on journeys which he never takes himself. Doctor Coffin describes a train announcer in the Grand Central Station in New York on a hot August afternoon, calling out the names of summer resorts, such as Lake Placid, Bar Harbor—places the very names of which suggest coolness and healing; but the

train caller never goes on any of these journeys. So the preacher may be pointing the way to moral and spiritual heights, directing others on journeys he never takes in his own experience. Can there be anything more futile than a man flustered and harassed in his own life trying to tell people how to find peace? Or a man despondent and obviously worried to death preaching on the subject of confidence in God?

Alice Maynell, the Catholic poet, was once talking with a friend about the mass in the Roman Catholic Church. This friend spoke of her inability to understand how Mrs. Maynell could accept the doctrine of the Real Presence of God in the sacraments. "Yes," said Mrs. Maynell, "it may be difficult, but you Protestants have something worse than the Real Presence—you have the Real Absence." It was an acute and penetrating comment on much of our Protestant worship, but it has a wider application. It applies to a minister's own inner life, from which any reality in what he says must find its source. We can never bring the real presence of God to other lives if we have the real absence in ourselves.

II

We approach reality in our preaching when we are facing actual lives instead of repeating platitudes. The French statesman Thiers once made the conjecture that the morning prayer of Napoleon III must have been, "Give us this day, O Lord, our

daily platitude." So perhaps some of our hearers might be forgiven if they thought that our prayer was not for a daily platitude, but at least for a Seven-Day platitude. A schoolboy once made this answer to the question, What is a vacuum? He said, "A vacuum is a large empty place where the Pope lives." Frequently it is a large empty place where the preacher lives. There is always the quality of a vacuum about any generality which is unrelated to an individual life. When Moncure D. Conway first began to preach, a dear old lady in the congregation said to him: "Brother Conway, you seem to be preaching to the moon." I, at least, know what she meant, for I have done, first and last, a good deal of preaching to the moon. I have often thought that the moon must be a well-evangelized planet. Yet our commission does not read: "Go ye into all the moon and preach the gospel," but "into all the earth"—a much more difficult place and yet, withal, a much more exciting one.

Adelina Patti used to describe the location of her home in Wales as being "twenty-three miles from everywhere and very beautiful." The latitude and longitude which she thus gave would serve as a description of a good many sermons. They are twenty-three miles from everywhere on earth, and very beautiful. Possibly there may be some question at times about the beauty; there is no doubt whatever about the distance.

Reality in preaching begins when our sermons take

their rise in the actual life of people. They should begin as John Dewey says the process of thinking begins, in a "felt difficulty." They become Christian preaching at its best when we bring the light of Christ to bear on the solution of that difficulty.

Last summer up on Mount Tom, in Massachusetts, I saw a little incident which has been connected with the problem of preaching in my mind ever since. Quite a company of people were up on the look-out tower on the top of the mountain upon a clear day. It seemed as though the whole State of Massachusetts and a good section of Connecticut and Vermont were spread out at our feet. The crowd of people were looking over the scene, quiet and struck with awe, when a woman in a high-pitched voice pointed to a little speck of a house in a street in Holyoke far beneath us and cried out to the whole company, "That's where I live." My first thought was: how strange that a woman with a magnificent landscape of a half of a State to look at should be interested in finding only the familiar spot where she lived. But I soon came to see that it was a perfectly natural feeling: it is what everyone is looking for. If in the first five minutes of our sermons we cannot make people inwardly cry out in recognition and interest, "That is where I live!" we have failed to make religion as real to them as we might. It is our task not only to take people up into a high mountain of vision, but also to enable them from that outlook to see clear down the valley to the little

house in a side street where they live day by day.

John Dewey says that to discuss ends without regard to means is to degenerate into sentimentalism. That kind of sentimentalism is the sin that does so easily beset us in the pulpit. We love the broad sweep of a generalization, or a big issue. We become unreal when we do not make clear the steps by which the individual in front of us may actually move toward the goal that we desire. One of the most valuable things ever said about preaching was said by Thomas Carlyle in a discussion of Jane Austen. Speaking of her minute characterization of people, he said: "I can do the big bow-wow strain perhaps as well as any now going, but it takes a fine and tender hand for delicate work." There is no question whatever that the preaching which reaches the hearts and molds the minds after the mind of Christ is the work of a fine and tender hand which comes close to definite problems of actual people. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote down an impression of a church service in a village church of Concord which deserves a permanent place in the memory of every preacher: "At church to-day I felt how unequal is this match of words against things. Cease, O thou unauthorized talker, to prate of consolation, resignation, and spiritual joys in neat and balanced sentences. For I know these men who sit below. Hush quickly, for care and calamity are *things* to them. There is the shoemaker whose daughter is gone mad, and he is

looking up through his spectacles to see what you have for him. Here is my friend whose scholars are all leaving him, and he knows not where to turn his hand next. Here is the stage driver who has jaundice and cannot get well. Here is B, who failed last year, and he is looking up anxiously. Speak things or hold thy peace."

III

We approach reality when we honestly face the implications of Jesus. By this I mean we should have reality not only in utterance, but realism in observation. We are often hesitant and ineffectual not because we lack courage, but because we lack understanding and insight into the working of anti-Christian forces and motives. Scientists know a great deal about the mammoth beasts which prowled around many thousands of years ago. We do not know nearly as much as we should about the great beasts that prowl about the earth to-day, mangling and trampling the lives of men and women and little children—the beast of a greed-motived industrialism and the great beast of the war system, as stupid, as destructive and as obsolete as a diplodocus.

Many Christians do not know nearly as much as they should of the very "respectable" forces which cause war. I used to pass every day by a church which had a name which greatly interested me—"The Church of the Holy Innocents." I often thought that if there were a slight change in the

spelling, the name might be made applicable to many a congregation. They are made up of almost "wholly" innocents. They are almost, if not utterly, innocent of the working of many of the forces in our industrial civilization, to the blighting of human lives. Many ministers can easily grasp the evil of a bad personal habit or any other issue which is quite simple. But where it ranges off into complexity, as many of our social evils do to-day, they fail to see the ethical wrong. Some ministers can grow quite disturbed on Sunday baseball who fail to see the utterly anti-Christian character of thousands of workers under feudal domination of the magnates of coal companies. We need to look at our complex world with the clear seeing eyes of Jesus and let his indignation search in our hearts. Aldous Huxley has put into a characteristic sentence the secret of reality in preaching, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you mad." Unless we do understand the implications of Jesus' message, we are apt to tone down the great change in heart and motive which he taught as essential, into merely a change in externals of one kind and another. Instead of Jesus being our model, frequently the pulpit model is Bunyan's interesting character Mr. Facing-Both-Ways. Mr. Facing-Both-Ways had as a firm foundation of his life the truth that there is much to be said on both sides and he always said it *seriatim* and *in extenso*. He has left a large progeny in the pulpit by whom the

bright blazing colors of Jesus' truth are toned down into dull neutral grays. I have often thought that it was a fortunate thing that the Sermon on the Mount did not have to go through a committee on the state of the church. I shudder to think what it would have sounded like.

In parliamentary law there is a great difference between an amendment and a substitute. The unreality of preaching is frequently due to the fact that the Christian gospel is preached as an amendment to life rather than a substitute of new motives and new methods for old ones. Christianity is not an amendment to a pagan way of life; it is a substitute for all that is before us. Christianity is not satisfied with the agreement that we shall use Colt revolvers instead of machine guns when we kill each other; it demands a faith "that love faileth never." It is not merely a decent and legal restraint on covetousness; it declares that "he who would be great among you, let him be your servant." It asks not merely that nations cease exploiting less privileged people in such an open and crass fashion; it affirms that the great Father God has made of one blood all nations to dwell together.

IV

Finally, we approach reality, as we push out to the moral frontiers of our time. Our preaching grows real when we seek to occupy for Christian domination the unchristianized areas of life,

regions which are to-day a "no-man's land" of conflicting forces. Last summer Mr. Voliva, of the Dowie colony in Zion City, Illinois, desiring to prove that the earth was flat, started out to find the rim of the world. I do not think much of his technique, but his idea is magnificent. The Christian preacher ought to live on the rim of our world. He ought not to abide safe in some central citadel where there are no undisputed questions and no hazardous Christian advances in practice. Charles Merz, in his extravagant and diverting picture of the American scene, *The Great American Band-Wagon*, describes the feverish and restless habit of perpetually driving automobiles, making a tour of the gasoline stations and hot-dog stands, to the loss of an American frontier. He says that the energy which for two centuries found a natural outlet pushing out to the Western frontier is now forced to expend itself in rather futile and insignificant running around the circle. As Mr. Simeon Strunsky has expressed the same truth: "The epic of '49 has become a Buick of '29."

It is a tragic thing in the life of an individual or an institution when they lose a frontier. Nothing can so bring the feeling of reality into life as the attacking of new problems and the conquering of new areas. The feeling of reality which is in the book of Acts comes from many causes, but it comes from one thing notably, that the company of Christians there pictured were always pushing back horizons. They were moving on an inward

frontier, going out by what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews called "a new and living way into the heart of the Father." They were advancing into a new moral frontier in the whole tangled thicket of sexual relations in the Greek and Roman world. We can see clearly in the Epistles to the Corinthians, for instance, that Paul was boldly seeking to occupy a whole new realm of human life with the Spirit of Jesus. They crossed a new frontier in carrying the gospel to the Gentiles and always there was the western push of the heralds of the cross.

In our present-day life the unoccupied areas of the whole organization of industry and of race relations call for Christian occupation. We will never lack reality, if we can write down after every year's work, after every day's work, that stirring entry made by Columbus in the log of Santa Maria, an entry which sums up the very spirit of the book of Acts: "We sailed West."

II

THE PLACE OF THE PREACHER

By Charles E. Jefferson

I BEGIN this lecture with two sayings of our Lord: "Only believe." "All things are possible to him who believes." Jesus was not thinking of the art of preaching when he spoke these words. He was announcing a principle of life, operative in all the kingdoms of human action; and therefore it is proper for us to think of this principle in connection with the work of preaching. Jesus of Nazareth placed greater emphasis upon belief than has any other teacher who ever lived. Whenever he spoke upon that subject he fell at once into the use of superlative and extravagant terms. For instance, "If you believe, you can pull up a tree by its roots." "If you believe, you can move a mountain." "If you believe, you can do things which are impossible." "If you believe just a little, you can work wonders." "Do you believe?" That was his first question. "Only believe"—that was his constant exhortation. "All things are possible to him who believes"—that was his amazing declaration. In these words he speaks to all men everywhere and especially does he speak to preachers. We preachers ought to write these words on the doorposts of our houses. We ought to paint them on our gates. We ought to

inscribe them on our study walls so that they may look down upon us as we write our sermons. We ought to stamp them on the pulpit stairs so that we may see them every time we stand up to preach. We ought to hear a voice perpetually sounding in our ears—"Only believe! All things are possible to him who believes!"

We are living in a skeptical age. Men are skeptical about many things. About nothing are they more skeptical than about the efficacy of preaching. The world, the flesh, and the devil are all arrayed against the preacher. The devil, of course, has always been the preacher's foe. The flesh has never been his friend. The world from top to bottom is indifferent to him. It is not the lower classes only which turn a deaf ear to the sermon, but the upper classes also. The educated and the cultivated and the honorable and the useful and the noble, in many instances, show no interest in the sermon. These lofty folk do not care for sermons. They do not need sermons to help them live or fit them for their work. There are in every community lawyers who never go to church, and physicians and teachers and merchants too. There are many men of light and leading who are totally indifferent to what the preacher says. Sermons do not appeal to them. The preacher lives in a different world and they are unconscious of his existence.

Others, however, are irritated by the preacher's presence. Sometimes they are provoked by him.

They say sarcastic things about him, and disparaging things about his sermon. They relish such adages as "Stupid as a parson," "Dull as a sermon." A well-known writer said a few years ago that one farmer renders a greater service to the world in a single season than do all the preachers in the land in a year! In tens of thousands of hearts the preacher has no place at all.

A fact of interest and deeper significance is that the saints on the whole are not enthusiastic over preaching. By saints I mean the members of our churches, the pious, the devout, the faithful. Even the elect seem to have lost interest in the sermons. The evening service in many localities has gone or is going. Twenty years ago there was what was called the Sunday-evening "problem." In many parishes that problem has been solved. It was solved by locking the church door Sunday evening. "One sermon a week is enough." That is the dictum pronounced with the same assurance with which we repeat an axiom of Euclid. "One sermon a week is enough." There is no doubt of that. That is a closed question—a demonstrated fact.

But even the morning service seems to be dwindling. Many of the saints are desultory in their church attendance. They are not hungering after sermons. They want short sermons, the shorter the better. Many men prefer golf to sermons. They must have the fresh air. Air is indispensable, sermons are not. Or if the head

of the house is altruistic, he will perhaps take the whole family in the automobile and enjoy a Sunday outing. That is far more interesting and rewarding than a sermon. If the weather is bad, the whole family can stay at home and read. "One can get more out of a book than out of a sermon." That is another of the accepted axioms. Even newspapers are considered more helpful than sermons. The newspapers keep one up with the times!

The very conception of religion seems to be changing. The emphasis has shifted from words to deeds. We now have a gospel of social service. Religion is doing things. Christians must be organized for work. There must be societies and clubs of many sorts. The preacher must be an executive, a sort of ecclesiastical engineer. His study should be turned into an office. It does not matter much what people believe: everything depends on what they do. Sermons have become superfluous. Doctrinal preaching especially has been outgrown.

Even our seminaries seem to have fallen into the habit of considering preaching subordinate or even negligible. Would you know what the seminary sages of the church believe, glance through the catalogue of almost any seminary. By their catalogues are our seminaries to be justified and by their catalogues are they to be condemned. Note the names of the chairs which the members of the faculty fill. There is perhaps

a professor of vocal expression, but he does not stand on a level with the other professors. His salary is not so large as theirs, and he is not held in such high honor. It may be he is only on half time. In some schools he is so little needed that it is possible for him to teach in several schools.

And yet the preacher's voice is in need of long-continued scientific training. It is the delicate instrument with which he is to do his finest work. Much depends upon his voice. His work is that of persuasion, and it is of great importance that he have a persuasive voice. He is to express all the emotions of the human heart, and therefore his voice should be highly cultivated, one capable of taking on emotional color and expressing numberless psychic distinctions. The heart is the lock and the voice is the key which unlocks the heart; and yet in the average seminary scant attention is paid to the voice. The prime function of the seminary does not seem to be the making of preachers.

If the art of voice production is neglected, so also is the art of literary expression. A preacher must work constantly with language. He ought to be a master of the art of using words. He should know how to play well on the organ of the English language, for on that organ he must play the music of his thought. But how much attention is paid in our seminaries to the study of English? On how many theological faculties are there high-salaried professors of English? It may be said that

a boy ought to learn his English in the high school, and in the academy and in the college, and so he ought, but he does not do it. The great majority of boys come to the seminary with only a rudimentary knowledge of their mother tongue and with hardly any practice at all in the art of using language with idiomatic grace and power. They do not know how to bring out of words their hidden values or to combine them into forms which open and inform the mind. The preacher is to be all his life an artificer in language, but the seminary does not take special pains to teach him the high and difficult art of using words. It does not seem to be the ambition of the average seminary to turn out preachers.

The art of reasoning is also too much neglected. The preacher is a craftsman in ideas. It is with ideas he is to refashion human lives. It is his task to link ideas together, and to clarify ideas, and to adorn ideas, and to glorify ideas, and to apply ideas, to cause ideas to live and glow and burn and work. He must know how to build words into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs, and paragraphs into an argument which will stimulate the mind, and kindle the heart, and move the will. Does the average seminary pay attention to this?

These are not the arts which are given prominent place in the majority of our seminaries. In some schools they are given no place at all. Candidates for the ministry are taught the history

of doctrine and the history of ethics and the history of philosophy and the history of theology and the history of pedagogy, and I know not how many other branches of history. They are taught sciences, not arts—the science of psychology and the science of sociology and the science of archæology and the science of homiletics, but at the end of the seminary course the average student does not know how to preach. The traditional seminary is not conducted for the express purpose of developing preachers. It turns out teachers, secretaries, experts in religious education, specialists, pundits in various branches of learning, but it does not labor in season and out of season to turn out pulpit artists, men gifted in the graces of vocal expression and capable of communicating feelings and ideas to the minds of those who are to be instructed and molded and redeemed by them.

The result is that the seminaries are discredited in the minds of multitudes of the people. "What is the matter with the seminaries that they do not give us preachers?" is a question often asked, sometimes in sadness and sometimes in indignation. Young men go into the seminary, stay there for three or four or five years, and when they appear at last in the pulpit their sermon is so dull or so abstract or so incomprehensible or so far away from life that laymen turn away from it in disgust. "I don't know what he was driving at" is a comment often heard. The average

layman finds it impossible to understand how a bright young man can stay three years in a seminary and at the end of that time be unable to speak thirty minutes in the pulpit in a way which will hold the attention and impart an idea of any practical value.

A still more disastrous result is the widespread feeling of skepticism concerning the utility of the pulpit. "What is the use of preaching anyhow?" is a question often heard. Our generation has placed a big interrogation point after the word "pulpit." The questions which are being asked are mischief-making. These questions are discussed not only in secular magazines and papers, but in ministers' meetings and in religious conferences and in the columns of the religious press. "Is the pulpit decadent?" "What is the matter with the pulpit?" "Has the pulpit a future?" "What will take the place of the pulpit?" "Has the modern pulpit a message?" "Are the great preachers all dead?" "Has the pulpit lost its influence?" "Is the sermon obsolescent?" "What will restore the pulpit?" When the atmosphere is charged with interrogation points, the pulses of church life cannot beat strong. Men cannot preach in that suffocating air.

In such an atmosphere young men intending to study for the ministry find their minds undergoing a change. Why should a boy want to go into a profession which seems to be on its last legs? What encouragement is there for an am-

bitious boy to cast his lot with a cause which is apparently doomed? It is sometimes said that the work of the minister is no longer a man's job; and if that be true, what clever boy would aspire to it? Christian business men often dissuade young men from going into the ministry, assuring them that they can exercise greater influence as laymen than as clergymen.

This chilling drizzle of criticism has a lamentable effect on the temper of many who are already in the pastorate. In the first place it damps their enthusiasm. This is a tragic loss. No man can preach well without a fire burning in him. When the fire dies down, the sermons lose their magic power. Moreover, this disparaging talk cuts the nerves of effort. Men cannot work with full vigor if they feel they are working in vain. To preach well, a man must work hard. He must work hard all the time. If he is not an indefatigable worker, he cannot hope to preach well. But who can work hard if he is discouraged? A man can drive himself to his work a few times, but he cannot do it continuously. Many men are slackers in the pulpit for the sole reason that they are discouraged. No one seemed to care for their sermons, and so they have come not to care either.

In this way we have reared a new brand of skeptics—clerical skeptics, men who have lost faith in their calling. They are preachers, but they do not believe in the power of preaching. They say in their hearts that all preaching is bunk.

Some of them joke about their sermons. They speak facetiously of "turning over the barrel." They refer laughingly to a sermon which they "got off" on a rainy day when they felt that "any old thing" would do. There is nothing sadder than the spectacle of a preacher joking to his people about his sermons.

When Martin Luther visited Rome for the first time he heard some priests one day joking about the mass. In an instant he realized that Rome was rotten. There is something rotten in a preacher's heart if he can joke about his sermons. That may be putting it too strong; maybe the poor man simply jokes to keep his heart from breaking. We sometimes laugh to hide our tears. There are more preachers under the juniper tree than the world imagines. God only can count the preachers in America who carry through the year a discouraged heart.

But the discouragement is not confined to the preachers. It runs through the entire Church of Christ. The number of disheartened churches is legion. They are disheartened because they cannot secure a preacher who knows how to preach. They have a man in the pulpit, but he is no preacher. They have a pastor; he can make calls, but he cannot preach. They have a good man, but he cannot preach. Committees of laymen are scouring the country incessantly in search of men who can preach. The patience and persistence of these committees are pathetic. They

will travel any number of miles in quest of a man who is alleged to be able to preach. They will go to Chicago, to Denver, to San Francisco—anywhere if only they can secure a preacher. They will go to England, to Scotland, to Wales, to Canada, even to Australia, so eager are they to find a preacher. There is to-day a famine of preachers. The Church of Christ is crying out for preachers. If you ask me what is the greatest need of America, my answer is, better preachers—not more preachers, but better preachers; not better organizers but better preachers, stronger preachers, more effective preachers.

What can be done about it? The first thing to do is to get rid of our fears. Fear hath torment. Fear deadens the heart. Fear paralyzes the will. The angel sent to announce the birth of Jesus said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid." Fear bars the heart to messages from heaven. Fear renders the preacher impotent.

The first fear to be cast out is that the printing press has superseded the pulpit. It has not done it yet, but it looks as though it is going to do it. The printing press certainly is busy. The papers and magazines and books are increasing all the time. They shout at us from the book stalls. They scream at us from across the street—"Come and read—Come and read!" The popular writers have all become preachers. They all have a message. They lecture us, warn us, exhort us. They aim to mold the thought and conscience and conduct

of their readers. Carlyle and Ruskin and Matthew Arnold were doing it yesterday. Chesterton and Russell and Shaw are doing it to-day. What chance has a preacher in the pulpit when preachers in book form can glide into men's homes and steal away their hearts?

But there is no occasion for alarm. The human voice will never be superseded, the printing press will never snuff it out. The voice is the most wonderful instrument in the world and also the most potent. Its place in the evolution of humanity will never be outgrown. It gives forth a tone which pierces deeper than any other sound and which climbs higher than any other note. It works miracles which no other magician can attain unto. At the opera you have often seen exhibitions of its amazing capacities. There were perhaps one hundred and twenty-five instruments in the orchestra, and they created an ocean of tune which swayed the audience, but right in the midst of this tempest of music a human voice was heard climbing heavenward above the storm. The wood instruments and the brass instruments and the stringed instruments and the drums were all left far below while the voice of the soloist soared to the top of the world, carrying the heart with it. You cannot have music at its fullest and divinest with the human voice left out. You cannot dispense with the vocal cords in the making of a world. Long ago God decided that in bringing a lost race back to him, he would make use of the

voice of the preacher. The voice is an angel of the Lord and it will never be dismissed until the work of redemption has been completed. Nothing can ever stifle the preacher's voice or take the place of it.

Strange to say, the voice was never more potent than it is to-day. We are filling the world just now with amplifiers. Why amplify? What is it we wish to amplify? Not the bellowing of bulls or the scream of locomotives or the clank of machinery or the hubbub of the streets. We set up amplifiers to magnify the human voice. It is a sound of which we do not hear enough and so we create magnifying instruments to carry the voice over wider areas and bring it within reach of a larger number of ears.

Recently science has created the radio, and half the world is listening in. What are men listening to? Sometimes to instrumental music, but generally to the human voice. We want to hear our great men speak. We are eager to hear their voices. We have our magazines and papers. We can read their speeches, but we want to hear their voices. The leaders of a political campaign never think of doing away with the voice. The children of this world are wiser in their generation than are many of the children of light. Preachers become panic stricken in the presence of magazines and papers and feel that "The day of the preacher is coming to an end," but the political managers, nothing daunted by the printing press, arrange

for speeches in every corner of the land. They have all the printing presses at their command. They can print thousands of tons of literature, but they know that literature is not enough. To put a great cause over, the human voice is needed. The human voice and the printing press must work together in bringing about political results. American voters must hear the voice of Mr. Hoover and of Governor Smith. No one could expect either man to reach the White House, if the human voice were stilled.

In the realm of spiritual achievement also the voice is indispensable. The cause of Christ cannot be carried onward to its coronation without the aid of the voice. Jesus of Nazareth cannot be seated on his throne without the assistance of preachers' voices. The preacher will never be superseded. The pulpit will never become obsolete. When the sun goes down in the evening of the last day, its dying rays will fall on the face of a man proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. Do not be afraid.

There's a fear that the preacher has been permanently ousted by the entertainer. The modern world is no doubt crazy over amusement. Everybody wants to be entertained. Where are those crowds going? To a game! What do the masses love? A movie. What are the most fascinating pages in the daily? The sport pages. Who draws the largest salaries? The most gifted entertainer.

A baseball game can draw fifty thousand

people. A football game can draw seventy-five thousand on the rawest November day. A prize fight—if Jack Dempsey is in it—can draw over one hundred thousand enthusiasts. If bull fights were legal in the United States, a bull fight would probably draw over two hundred thousand spectators. A preacher stands no chance at all when he competes with a first-class boxer. The latest moving picture is in greater demand than is the preaching of the greatest preacher. The audience at the movie numbers from two thousand to five thousand. The movie theater is open not one day a week, but seven days. The doors are open not at one hour in the day, but at several hours. And so often as the doors are opened, the theater is filled. Compare those throngs with the Sunday congregation of the preacher and it is evident that the preacher is not in the race at all. The movie has left him hopelessly behind. His occupation is, on the face of things, gone.

But in reply to this, it can be said that the preacher is not an entertainer. He is not in the amusement business. He is in the world not to make a show, but to do a work. Let him try to be a showman and he is lost. If he attempts to compete with the entertainer, he is doomed to ignominious defeat. If he compares his congregation with the audience in the theater, he shows himself a superficial man. He is comparing things which cannot be compared. The vaudeville star has his place, the preacher also has his place, and

the two places are a long distance apart. The preacher who performs stunts soon wears himself out. The showman on the other corner will outlast him. The preacher who attempts to draw a crowd by novelties and eccentricities, fantastic subjects and bizarre texts, unconventional tricks and sensational antics, has entered on the broad road which leads to destruction. The preacher who tries to keep up his congregation to the theater level by thunderous oratory or gorgeous rhetoric is making a fool of himself and is doing the Church of Christ a great wrong.

The preacher cannot be rightly compared with any other man in the town. His work is entirely different from that which any other man is called to do, and therefore he cannot be measured by the standards or judged by the achievements of other men. The clown can get five thousand people to laugh at him. What of it? Babe Ruth can draw fifty thousand spectators. What of that? Jack Dempsey can attract and hold the attention of one hundred thousand people. What then? These men entertain, they amuse, they thrill, but they do not feed the mind, they do not refine the heart, they do not purify and elevate the spirit. They accomplish nothing lasting. They work solely upon the surface. They do not reach the deep springs of action. They are players. They strut their brief hour upon the stage and then are heard no more.

Thousands of preachers are needlessly dis-

couraged. They are disheartened by the size of their congregation. They seem to be doing nothing, because their congregation is so small. Their despondency is foolish. You cannot measure a man's achievement by the size of the crowd which looks at him. The clown draws the crowd. The teacher draws a select few. A teacher of Shakespeare does not grow despondent because his class is smaller than the crowd at a prize fight. A teacher of Plato does not give up in despair because an acrobat can draw a bigger crowd than he can. Why should a teacher of Jesus fall into the doldrums because a vaudeville actor is more popular than he? In all these matters we should be sensible, judging not according to appearances, but according to the eternal facts. A preacher is doing a great and difficult work. He is training men to think like God. If he has only two or three, God is there to assist him. It is a needed work. Without it the world is irretrievably lost. Verily I say unto you, the entertainers have their reward. They make money and tickle the crowd. But their names are not written in the Book of Life. The preacher has a place in the structure of the universe from which no entertainer, however popular, will ever be able to oust him.

There is a third fear—the fear that the world has grown incorrigibly secular and that the spiritual appeal must henceforth fall on deaf ears. Men are no longer attracted, we are told, by promises of heaven and they no longer have the

slightest fear of hell. The arguments which were powerful on the lips of our predecessors are impotent when they fall from our tongues. The great preachers of the past could use weapons which have long since become antiquated. Men fought with swords and spears till gun powder was invented, but when guns appeared, the swords and spears were done away. Heaven and hell were thrilling subjects in the days of our fathers, but to the modern world they mean nothing at all. The day of the preacher, therefore, is gone. So it seems.

There is no doubt that the present generation is little interested in the other world. This present world has become absorbingly attractive. It has never been so fascinating as it is at the present hour. The world of things has never glittered as it is glittering now. There have never been so many interesting places to visit, and so many interesting ways of traveling, and so many interesting spectacles to look at, and so many interesting things to do, and so many interesting pleasures to enjoy, and so many interesting toys to play with, and so many interesting problems to puzzle over, and so many interesting hypotheses and speculations and theories to try out. It is a great and glorious world in which we are living, and it is not to be wondered at that multitudes are saying—one world at a time is enough. What is the preacher to do in a generation which has lost its interest in the world beyond death?

My answer is, "Let him deal in his sermons chiefly with the world that now is." That is his supreme business. That has always been his chief business. The preacher is not primarily a teacher of things which are going to happen in a future world. His great subject is the kingdom of God. That was the favorite theme of Jesus, and he has given it to all of his preachers. The central topic of Jesus was not heaven or hell. It is surprising how seldom he mentioned either of them. He did not seem to be greatly interested in them. The Old Testament prophets had not been interested in them either. They have nothing to tell us about the world beyond death. Apparently, they were not interested in it and had no information about it. Jesus was like them in giving us almost no instructions in regard to the other world. He assumes that there is such a world, but he makes no attempt to describe it. If you want a description of hell, you must read Milton or Dante or Virgil. You will find no description of it in the New Testament. If you want a description of heaven, you must turn to the novelists. You will find none either in the Gospels or the Epistles. The page in the last book of the New Testament descriptive of the New Jerusalem is not a description of the beyond death world, but a description of what this world is to become after God has done his perfect work. The cardinal subject of the preacher is the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is here. It is not

a kingdom to look forward to after death, but a kingdom to be established and extended here and now. It was our Lord's constant declaration that the kingdom is at hand and it was his passionate exhortation that we shall pray constantly that this kingdom might come more and more fully, the will of God being done upon this earth even as it is done in heaven. He commanded men to seek for the Kingdom above everything else, and to him the Kingdom is human society permeated by the principles of justice and harmony and good will.

The business of the preacher, then, is to train men in the art of living together on this earth. He is to inspire them to unite in the work of building here the city of God. He is to unfold the principles of heaven and teach men how to work them into the institutions of earth. He is to teach the nations how to live together as members of the family of God. He is to hold up the ideal of a warless world. He is to persuade the human race to learn war no more. All of his sermons have for their supreme end the conversion of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of Christ. The kingdoms of society and education and business and industry and politics and diplomacy are all to be permeated and dominated by the Spirit of Jesus.

This is the theme of the preacher and there have never been so many people interested in this theme as to-day. All thoughtful people are more

and more interested in social problems. They are setting themselves in increasing numbers against social evils. They are banding together in enterprises for social uplift. They want to save men from hell—the hell of their slums and the hell of war. They want to get men into heaven, the heaven of a wholesome social order. Let the preacher preach the kingdom of God with grace and force and he will never lack an audience. Men are awake everywhere to the gospel of Jesus, and the gospel of Jesus is not a gospel either of "heaven or of a hell" somewhere beyond this earth. It is the gospel of a regenerated human race, doing the will of God on this planet even as it is done in realms into which sin has never come. It is a glorious day for the preacher. No day equal to it has ever dawned. His congregation is all ready for him. The mind is prepared. The heart is alert. The spirit is responsive. In every community there are groups of serious people hungry for fuller instructions as to the most effective ways of pulling down the strongholds of evil and building up the city of God. Fear not, O preacher, and go forth rejoicing, thanking God that the fields are white unto the harvest, and that to you, at a critical time, the glorious commission has been given to preach the gospel of the Kingdom.

Follow me! How clear and peremptory these words ring out! The Master has come and is calling for us. We can hear him say: "I was a preacher. My Father sent me into the world to preach. Men

wanted me to do something else. Many of the best men of my day did their utmost to persuade me not to preach. They wanted me to be a philanthropist, a feeder of the poor. Poverty in Palestine was awful and in the homes of thousands the crying need was bread. Men implored me to create bread. I would not do it. My business I felt was to preach. Men urged me to become a magician. They insisted on my doing stunts. They wanted me to be an entertainer. They coaxed me to jump from a pinnacle of the Temple. Such a feat would have thrilled a crowd. It would have produced a deep sensation, but I would not do it. My business I felt certain was to preach. Multitudes wanted me to become a political reformer. They wanted me to head an insurrection. The feeling against the Roman Government was deep and passionate. The crowd was waiting for a leader. It was eager to use the sword. It wanted to crown me King. But I refused to lead an army. I declined a kingly crown. I preferred to be a preacher. My business was to preach. It was the devil who tempted me not to preach.

"My countrymen called me stupid. They said I was throwing my life away. They declared that nothing could be accomplished by a preacher. But nevertheless I kept on preaching. Some asserted I was a coward, because I refused to head an insurrection. My patriotism was derided. A patriot, they said, ought to draw the sword for the liberation of his country. But I kept on preach-

ing. I spent all my days in telling men about God, about his greatness and his goodness. They were ignorant of him, and so I told them all about him. I told them about his sympathy and his patience and especially about his friendliness and love. Day after day I spoke to them about their duties, what they owed to God and their fellow men. I held up high ideals before them and pointed out the motives from which men ought to act. I spoke to them often of a new social order which they could undoubtedly establish if they were only brave and persistent and true. I spent all my time in preaching. I came back again and again to my favorite theme, the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the worth of human personality, the heinousness of sin, the supremacy of love, and the glory of the kingdom of God.

"I was a faithful preacher, but I was not successful, not successful when measured by the standards of men. I was not a popular preacher. I was popular at first, but that was before men found me out. They did not at the start apprehend clearly my cardinal principles nor did they understand what discipleship really involved, but as soon as they caught the drift of my meaning, they turned on their heels and followed me no more. My audience gradually dwindled till during the last six months of my life my congregation was limited to twelve men. The world was more interested in magicians and politicians, in a full

dinner pail and public offices than in preaching, and so my hearers were few. Most people were indifferent to me and some came to hate me. They were sorry I was alive. They became afraid of my preaching. They did not like my ideas. They did not know what mischief they might possibly do. And so more and more men came to despise me, and at last a wild mob screamed: 'Away with him!' 'Crucify him!' I was indeed the most unpopular of all preachers.

"And I was also a failure if by failure you accept the judgment of men. A man fails when he does not accomplish the thing he sets out to do. I failed to achieve what I had set my heart on. I wanted men to think of God as I thought of him, but this they refused to do. I wanted them to think of life and character and duty and destiny as I thought of them, but they spurned my ideas as false. I wanted them to live the kind of life which I lived, but they continued to follow ways of their own. I tried to persuade them, but they could not be persuaded. I tried to win them, but they could not be won. I did my best, but I failed. I failed in every city in which I preached. Even in the cities in which I worked hardest and longest I hardly made any impression at all. I could do nothing in Nazareth and so I went to Capernaum, but I could do little there. I preached a long time in Bethsaida and a long time in Chorazin, but to all of my preaching they turned a deaf ear. Again and again I went to Jerusalem,

and there in the Temple I delivered my message. It came burning hot from my heart and there too my preaching was futile. The capital of my country turned its back on me. It was Jerusalem which crucified me.

"I was a failure according to all worldly standards. The world at the end of my life was apparently no better because of anything I had said. And yet I believed I had succeeded. I had preached. I had finished the work that God had given me to do. On the last night I said to my friends; 'Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.' I had not overcome Jerusalem, or Judæa, or Samaria, or Galilee, or Greece, or Rome, but I had overcome the world, the spirit of it and the temptations of it. I had overcome my doubts and my fears, my shrinkings and my dependencies, my inclinations to surrender and the stings of defeat. And so in spite of my apparent failure, I went out of the world triumphant, convinced that I would some day, through my preachers, draw all men unto me. The work of my preachers is indeed difficult, but their ultimate victory is certain; for I am going to be with them even unto the end of the world."

III

THE MENTAL HABITS OF THE MINISTER

By Willard L. Sperry[1]

It has been said of a certain modern French writer that he invites his friends to eat in the kitchen. The phrase means that instead of serving up to his readers a finished literary product, he asks them to share with him the mental processes by which he does his work.

This picturesque metaphor does plainly mark a difference in books. Some books are like a course dinner magnificently served by silent and efficient waiters. You get the finished result, but you have no idea how the thing was prepared. Other books are like a meal prepared while every one is sitting around the kitchen, and finally served there. You see how everything is cooked and you follow your meal through in its preparation. The course dinner in the dining room is more genteel. But there is something to be said also for eating in the kitchen.

If this homely metaphor is not out of place in such a sober connection, we might press it a step farther and say that liberal Protestantism is a

[1] This address was also delivered at the commencement exercises of Rochester Theological Seminary in May, 1928, and is here reprinted from the "Rochester Theological Seminary Bulletin" of June, 1928.

religion which invites its communicants to eat in the kitchen. The great religions of authority serve their conclusions with a decorous finality. You do not know and you are neither expected nor required to know how the result was arrived at. Enough for you that competent and responsible persons have reached these conclusions and are willing to share them with you. Your only concern is to enjoy the result, you are not supposed to have any interest in the process of their preparation.

Protestantism, however, is a religion which lays great stress on the method. The religious life is, for it, a way of thinking and acting. The process counts for very much. One would not say that for Protestantism the religious method is more important than the religious result, but one must say that we hold that no right or important result can be reached by a wrong method, and that in order to understand the result one must have shared in the process of reaching it. Our interest in how a man thinks is quite as keen as our interest in what he thinks, and very often we get more help from a man whose mental and moral methods we trust, even though his results be inconclusive or irregular, than from the man whose results are perfectly correct, but whose mind and character do not impress us as trustworthy.

I am inviting you, then, for an hour, to come and "eat in the kitchen"; to consider three or four of the habits of mind which are absolutely essential

to the right prosecution of the ministry as we conceive and try to practice it.

There is, first of all, that matter of truthfulness. It would seem to be unnecessary to insist that the minister must be a truthful man. This proposition is so self-evident that no one questions it. But one remembers what Coleridge has to say of such a situation. "Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true that they lose all power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul . . . To restore a commonplace truth to its first uncommon luster, you need only translate it into action." As any minister knows, the business of translating his abstract theory that he ought to be truthful into actual words and deeds is costly. There never has been a time in the church when men have not found truth-telling costly. I doubt if there ever will be a time. That is what makes truth precious; it costs so much to find and then to say. I suppose it is with truthfulness as it seems to be with purity: the purest men are the men who are most conscious of their impurities—witness the sixth chapter of Isaiah. So the most truthful men are also the most conscious of their untruthfulness.

One of the most remorselessly honest men of our time was Father George Tyrrell, the Roman Catholic Modernist. In one of his letters he says that as to the question "Are we honest?" one can only reply, "Indifferent honest." He goes on to

add that people seem to suppose that honesty is the simplest and most primitive of the virtues, whereas it is the last and rarest grace of a saintly life; and that, as the best sign of one's growing honesty is an increased awareness of one's dishonesties, so a determination to purge out these dishonesties is the surest sign of increasing truthfulness. When we study in history or witness in life the experience of the pitiless truthteller, we realize how imperfectly we are realizing this ideal. The ideal of truthfulness, therefore, is not beyond the need of reaffirmation.

There are two definitions of truth which are generally accepted. First, truth is the agreement of my ideas with reality. Second, truth is the agreement of my ideas with each other. Each of these accounts of truth must receive notice.

First, then, truth is the agreement of our ideas with reality, that is, with what is so in the world around us. It is, I think, absolutely essential for us to realize that the reactions of our minds to evidence from the outside world are at any given moment more or less automatic. In the moment when we pass judgment, saying, "Yes, that is so," or "No, that is not so," our preferences and personal prejudices have no power to alter this more or less automatic judgment which the mind passes on fact. Many of these judgments cannot be final; it may be our duty to get more evidence or to examine the given evidence still farther. But nevertheless the inclination of the mind to

say "Yes" or "No" is not a matter of choice. Our minds may be imperfect machines, the facts may be inadequate, but put the mind in the presence of a supposed fact and the action of the mind is more or less mechanical; it reacts toward a proposition with consent or away from it with disapprobation quite independently of any volition of ours.

All of us have had experiences of this sort in our religious and theological history. Propositions calling for a revision of some of our most cherished ideas have come to us as the witness of nature or history. Being confronted with such an apparent fact the mind has instantly responded with its native reaction, "Yes, that is so." We have fought off that unwelcome conclusion, we would have preferred to have it otherwise, we have sought new reasons to defend the old and cherished view; but all the while we have known that once the mind has given its direct and native consent to some new fact, we cannot escape reckoning with that response. I mention in my own case a single such incident: the conclusion that the mystery religions played a very great part in the origin of the Christian sacraments. I did not like the idea when first it presented itself to me; I do not altogether like it now. I could wish that I might believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper were free of any such syncretistic elements and influence. But once I saw what I take to be the historical facts my mind said, "Yes, that is so," and I have had

no option but to accept that conclusion. You can think of similar cases in your experience.

Now, it is at this point that modern religion needs to understand and then to make its peace with modern science. A very fine doctor once said to me, "The trouble with your profession is that it is not as honest as mine." What he meant was that we are not as willing to let our minds correspond to facts as doctors are. I deplore the criticism, but I think it is warranted. In general, ministers are more given to special pleading, to apologetics, to a religion of the emotions and the will, rather than to a religion which trusts this instant, uncontrolled, native tendency of the human mind to say "Yes" to what is so.

The spiritual distinction of all modern science is this moral determination of the scientist to trust these reactions of the mind at any given moment. That is his only hope of progress. It does not do to say, "Our minds are poor frail things; the facts may be deceptive." If you are to think at all, you must dare to trust at the given moment this native tendency of the human mind to agree with what is so and to reject what is not so. To refuse to do this is to forfeit the right to all first-hand thinking and to invite a permanently second-hand intellectual life.

The minister needs, then, to understand the mind of science as it puts away all prejudices and preferences and concedes what it has no alternative but to accept as being so. Huxley says

that he has observed that his likes and dislikes have little to do with the truth. He says that science teaches in a very wonderful way the Christian doctrine of entire submission to the will of God; that we must bow down before facts as little children, be prepared to go wherever and to whatever abysses nature may lead or we shall learn nothing. This is the only way to peace of mind.

Darwin says that any success which he had as scientist he owed to his cultivated mental habit of never letting an exception pass unnoticed. He had observed that facts which did not fit his theories were more apt to escape his attention than those which fitted his theories, and so he made a special point of noting the facts which did not fit his ideas. Owing to this habit of mind, he continues, he had to revise practically every one of his theories during his lifetime, but with the result that there was no objection urged to his final doctrines which had not occurred to him and which he had not attempted to answer.

The *Theologia Germanica*, that noble manual of mediæval mysticism, has a fine phrase about "the unmercenary love of God," that is, the love of God for his own sake. Insofar as there is that kind of genuinely selfless religion in the modern world, it has its best exemplification in the scientist's unmercenary love of the truth. By contrast with this unmercenary love of God as we find it in such characters as Darwin and Huxley,

most of our professional ministerial thinking and speaking is special pleading for positions which we habitually have held, like to hold, or would prefer to hold. We pick the facts that make our case, we shirk the facts which tell against our case. Personally, I am certain that one of the reasons why even the most liberal Protestantism does not attract and hold the enthusiastic consent of the world of scientists is to be found in the fact that our profession is not as honest as theirs. They are conscious of the residual traces of apologetic in our thinking and writing and speaking, a desire to make and to defend an hereditary position rather than a humble fearless intellectual willingness to know what is so.

One would say, then, that if a minister aspires to think for himself, rather than to rely permanently upon external authorities, he must take the risk of trusting these actions and reactions of the mind to what nature, history, society reveal to him as being plainly so. Whether the truth so arrived at is congenial, whether it is orthodox, whether it is even useful, is beside the mark. His only hope of getting at more truth and finally all truth lies in his trusting the as yet imperfect power of the mind to tell him what is so. He will suffer in this process both privately and publicly; and, what is more serious, he will make mistakes. But his chance to be an honest man, and his good name as an honest man will lie in his determination not to repudiate his own mind or to doubt

its processes. Truthfulness, in this objective definition of the word as the agreement of our ideas with reality, lies down the road of daily, disciplined, sober determination to seek that agreement and at any given moment to trust it, until the mind is better educated or the facts more adequately envisaged. We cannot hope to have much to say in the modern world, which is being more and more impregnated with the scientific spirit, if our profession is less honest than the trades and professions round about.

There is the second definition of truth as the agreement of our ideas with each other. This is the subjective account of truth as sincerity. Insincerity is commonly defined as thinking one thing and saying another. It is hardly worth our while to linger over this lie in the soul. There is no forgiveness for it so long as a man is conscious of it and persists in it. It is, traditionally, the sin of which most of us are accused, and of which in our more timid and cautious moments we are perhaps sometimes guilty. It is the sum of all sins, the genius of sinfulness, that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that puts a man outside the pale. No orthodoxy or respectability or immediate success and usefulness can shrive a man of any lurking suspicion that he is nursing this lie in his soul. It suffices to point out, however, that the lie in the soul is not the monopoly of the profession of the ministry. It is, indeed, the stock in trade of the politician and the char-

latan everywhere—a commonplace with which the world is sadly too familiar. It is the more grievous in religion and the more reprehensible in the ministry since the issues there are so grave and the ideals so high. An insincere man in the church is more intolerable than an insincere man in politics, because religion sets a standard so much higher than that of party politics. Part of the business of the minister is a daily struggle with the lie in the soul.

But there is another aspect of interior untruthfulness to which attention may appropriately be called. Very few of us have any closely articulated system of theology to-day. Certainly, we have no system in liberalism comparable in its interior rigidity to Calvinism. Calvinism was built up like a steel skyscraper, everywhere tested for strain, and everywhere trussed and articulated so that the whole might have a fine rigidity. Most of us are like children building houses with cards or blocks, as compared with Calvin, who was, in this respect, a veritable worker in structural steel. The trouble with Calvinism was not its logic, but its premises. We believe it to have been a steel skyscraper built on the sand. But we by contrast are building houses of cards on the rock. What we need eventually is the same kind of interior truthfulness in a system which Calvin had, on a better foundation than his.

I mention this matter because one of our temptations is to treat to-day's sermon as though it

were a thing apart, with no relation to other sermons and other ideas. It suffices if to-day we make this point, even at the expense of slight over-emphasis and exaggeration. It does not matter if what we say to-day proves incompatible with what we shall find ourselves saying a week hence; the memory of the congregation is short and their critical powers meager. But this hand-to-mouth preaching of topical sermons makes for a kind of total interior untruthfulness in our intellectual history and our preaching as a whole, that is, for a failure of our ideas to agree with each other.

This deficiency cannot be made good by series of sermons which are artificially articulated and which keep some kind of continuity and coherence to our thought. That is an external device. The problem goes deeper than that, and becomes a matter of a basic fair-mindedness, a determination not to overdo or over emphasize to-day's truth, for the sake of the immediate result, if, in so doing, the total body of one's truth is badly warped or put out of a true and whole perspective.

There is one virtue of modern thought and speech which is a sealed secret to modern America, and that is the power of understatement. The shrieking self-assertive civilization in which we live relies solely upon the effect of overstatement. This, I fear, applies as truly to our preaching as to our political campaigning, our advertising, our reforming. Personally, I should say that the time had come when it would be good strategy for

a man who wished to attract attention to his ideas or his wares to try the deliberate and artistic strategy of understatement. And while no minister may use dodges to gain a hearing for his truth, certainly the constant habit of ministerial overstatement in defense now of one idea, now of another, subtly destroys confidence in the interior sincerity of his thinking, and reveals that kind of untruthfulness which is the failure of our ideas to agree with one another. In presenting any truth or duty a man must consider not merely the effect and reaction of the moment, but as well, the long-range place and importance of what he is saying. He cannot cry "wolf" twice a Sunday for fifty-two Sundays in the year and expect to rouse the populace to resolute weekly wolf hunts on the morning and evening of every Sabbath day. In short, our general ideas of Christianity ought to agree with one another and have an interior coherence.

We come now to a further mental habit of the minister, accuracy of observation and description. One is more and more impressed with the general looseness of the mental habits of the minister as compared with the precision of the mental and manual processes of the world round about. We live in a world in which glittering generalities are less and less serviceable and compelling. It is our profession to speak with confidence about such vast matters as God, eternity, immortality, the peace of nations, the reconstruction of society, the

revision of moral codes. It is the business of the rest of the world to make cash books balance to a penny, to adjust bearings to the fraction of a millimeter, to drive through the traffic of a city street with not more than half an inch to spare all the time, to collate manuscripts so that every single changed letter is noted.

No one, I think, can fail to be struck by the general contrast between the precision of the work of the modern world and the vagueness of the average sermon. A friend of mine told me that on a recent occasion he heard a minister settle the problem of capital and labor in a twenty-minute sermon. He said that you had only to look at him to know that he had had no experience with capital and that after you had heard him you knew that he knew nothing about labor!

As a professor of homiletics I am familiar with the conventional classroom sermon which does not feel that it has vindicated its right to be unless it has devoted a paragraph to the social problem and another paragraph to the question of international peace. These closing paragraphs which make a sweeping and grandiose bow to these vast themes, at the end of a sermon which has nothing immediately to do with either, are to-day as much a platitude as the sermons of a generation ago which were supposed to be incomplete and unevangelical if they did not contain a closing reference to the saving power of the cross. We know to-day that those closing paragraphs about

the cross were usually a pure homiletic convention. It is important to realize that the contemporary conventional reference to the League of Nations in a closing paragraph is another convention, our convention, dated nineteen hundred and twenty-eight.

So with the stock type of sentence which is drearily familiar to the critic of sermons—the sentence which says, "How deeply this truth is borne in upon us as we contemplate the lives of such men as Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Savonarola, and Saint Francis!" The time sequence is usually ignored in these sentences, and that is annoying. But what is worse; such a sentence means nothing, proves nothing, says nothing. It is a pure bit of preaching convention void of any content or significance. It takes three seconds to say "Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Saint Francis." No human mind can put any valuable content into those four words in three seconds. They are the purest preaching incantation. They belong with the paper prayers fluttering on a Buddhist prayer wheel.

It is enough to mention one of these men at a time, and having mentioned him to say something accurate about him to prove the case. Most of our so-called "illustrations" in sermons are not illustrations at all. They are simply a matter of pushing a string of door bells in the apartment house of the hearer's mind in the vague hope that there is "somebody home" here and there who

will answer. An illustration is supposed to be concrete evidence in defense of an abstract proposition. As usually practiced in the average sermon it is a mere matter of frantic appeal to the storehouse of the hearer's muddled information in the hope that there may be some response.

Doctor Davison, the director of the Harvard College choir, sometimes talks to our theological students about music in church. He is accustomed to tell them that they are dealing with what is a very high emotional explosive, and that if the chemists in the Institute of Technology handled their elements as carelessly as the average minister handles music, they would have blown up the Institute of Technology years ago. It is, perhaps, hardly just to say that the sweeping generalities which abound in so many of our sermons are high explosive, but it is just to say that if engineers, electricians, chemists, physicists, surgeons, doctors, bankers, and the like were as vague about their mental processes as too many of us are, the modern world would be a far less reliable place in which to live and do business. Banks would fail, electric power houses give out, patients usually die on the operating table, if they were the objects of as vague thinking as goes into the average sermon.

Here is the justification for certain of our requirements for the theological degree. It is conceded that a knowledge of Hebrew, of the problem of the Synoptic Gospels, of the Christological

controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries may not be immediately serviceable for preaching and parochial uses; but it is absolutely essential that a theological training should demand of a man the same kind of mental precision which is required in graduate courses in engineering, law, medicine, and the like. We need to be able to maintain our intellectual self-respect in an age of precise thinking, and to this end it is appropriate that our training should include certain restricted disciplines in which precision is possible. In the terms of our own interests it is important that we should know, through the rigors of our own intellectual history, how the world of men in which we live think and work. A man of precise intellectual habits commands respect and confidence in the larger society of his peers.

There is a final matter upon which a remaining word may be said. What we call dullness in a man's thought and speech is usually to be attributed to a lack of imagination. And many sermons, otherwise true and potentially significant, fall lifeless from the pulpit edge because they embody no exercise of the imagination.

We are to follow Wordsworth and Coleridge in distinguishing between imagination and fancy, even if we do not subscribe to their particular distinction. In general, we may say that fancy is the inventive energy of the mind exercising itself without reference to any objective fact, while imagination is the recreative power of the mind

addressed to facts that are apparently lifeless and dead, in the attempt to give them vitality.

When we imagine anything, in this stricter sense of the word, we do not conjure up a fiction; we brood over an actuality until we make it real to ourselves and others. This seems to me to be very largely a matter of intellectual unselfishness and of a sensitiveness of emotions.

Much, if not most, of our lack of imagination is a matter of sheer mental selfishness. We do not take the trouble to get out of ourselves mentally and over into a fact outside ourselves. Conversely, one may say that selfish people are habitually wanting in imaginative power. Why is it that we are not all making large contributions annually to the effort to discover the cause and the cure of cancer? The reason is mainly that we prefer not to know about cancer, we shirk the fact of it, and are unwilling to make any effort to realize what it must be like to have this dread disease and to know that one is going to die of it. Why do we not devote our lives to prison reform? Because we hurry by a prison wall, preferring not to think about what life is like beyond that wall, because we do not like to visit prisons or talk with prisoners. We are intellectually more comfortable not to imagine these things, that is, to bring them alive as felt realities in our own experience.

We say that cold reasons never move men much, that men are moved by their feelings. That is true. The dead weight of indubitable fact is never quite

enough to make us act. We act upon those areas of knowledge which have been touched by imagination, which have been felt as our own possible experience. And in this world it is the men of imagination, that is, the men who make us feel what it is to stand in such and such a situation, who persuade us to act effectively. The poets, the dramatists, the prophets move us more strongly than the logicians, because they bring facts, situations, problems alive for us as our own concern.

Now, I am deeply persuaded, as I have hinted elsewhere and in print, that much of our otherwise honest and precise preaching fails to get any effect because it lacks imagination. A strain of deliberate intellectual selfishness remains to be eradicated. We preach about the problems of our own lives and choose themes which interest us. The subjects thus provided may be important and what we say may be true, but there is no deliberate mental unselfishness in our preaching history. We do not try to see how life looks to, or what Christianity expects of, the traffic officer, the chartered accountant, the mill operative, the college boy. We are much exercised, for example, over the question of religion in the American college. But there would be something wrong with the average college boy who took as seclusive and specialized an interest in theological subjects as we take. We must not be distressed if the religion of the undergraduate is not so articulate

as our own. It is occasionally wholesome to recall in memory, as accurately as possible, just what we thought and felt about these matters at eighteen, and not to require of eighteen the ideas and interests of the ministerial profession at forty or fifty.

We come here to the seat of a deep-rooted difficulty in the intellectual life of the modern minister. If we are to acquit ourselves in public with anything like decency, there is a vast amount of accurate information which must be acquired. The necessity of knowing the facts, the initial assurance that one will not be thrown on his facts, is the sober beginning of the business of preaching. But these facts are so many and so difficult to master that it takes up too much of our time to get the bare facts and leaves us far too little time for that sympathetic brooding over facts by which imagination calls the fact to life as a part of one's personal experience.

Furthermore, the modern method of getting at facts is the critical, analytical method. In this method most of us have been well trained, and to the daily use of this method most of us are more or less habituated. This is one way of getting at the truth of facts, analyzing them into their component parts. But the ordinary processes of scientific analysis have heaped up a modern Valley of Dry Bones and it is not often that we approach these bones, very many and very dry, in the prophetic spirit which would recreate them and give them life.

I should think that a minister could have no better mental and moral preparation for his preaching and pastoral ministry than the deliberate cultivation of the habit of going around the world, looking attentively and sympathetically at all sorts and conditions of his fellow men, and asking, "I wonder what life looks like to that man, what his problems are, what his compensations for living are, what he wants from religion and has a right to expect from it, and what he is actually getting from religion?" Imagination, exercised toward our fellow human beings, who are for all working purposes its most immediate objects and occasions, is simply this deliberate cultivation of the habit of trying to know and to understand how life looks to the other man.

Since it is hard to cultivate this power of the imagination without aid, most of us need constant discipline in the great works of the imaginations—pictures, music, plays, novels, and the like. With the dire necessity of becoming better informed in serious matters pressing hard upon him, the average minister is inclined to think that he cannot afford to take time for these diversions, as he regards them. My answer would be that he cannot afford not to take time for them. They are as necessary for his intellectual and moral history as the drier and more analytic studies which he pursues in his quest for facts. It is no use to have found a fact if the fact remains lifeless and impotent in your keeping. Many of us have quite as

much to learn from Carlyle the historian as from Acton the historian; from Turgenief and Tolstoy as psychologists as from William James and Leuba, the psychologists; from what Thomas Hardy says about Egdon Heath beneath his feet and the stars over head at midnight, as from what geology and astronomy have to say of that soil and those stars.

We had in our School at Harvard some years ago an absolutely first-class student, who habitually turned in a string of "A's" at the end of each half year. He was painstaking, honest, and accurate. But his sermons were chronically dull. They were all so true and all so dead. You could not take exception to any of his facts, yet the sermon was like the funeral service over some great man whose lifeless body lay in a casket. The difficulty with him was that he was absorbed in and satisfied with his historical and critical discussion of religion, that he was entirely neglecting the sides of the mind which are represented by the imagination, the intellectual sympathy and the capacity for recreation which imagination requires. I told him, at the end of one year, when the sermons had been impeccably correct and yet dull, that he was not to open any book on history, psychology, or philosophy for the whole summer vacation, but that he was to read Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad; that only some plunging of his mind into an entirely different medium would save him from being an incredibly tiresome and ineffectual preacher in spite of his

pathetically earnest and single-minded desire to help people to the truth.

We need, then, to keep mental company with those great exemplars of the imagination who have the magic power of helping us understand how life looks to the other man, not merely for the sake of getting their view of their heroes, but of catching this habit and power of their minds to live unselfishly and creatively. Imagination is really nothing but the Christian virtues of sympathy and compassion. One of those words is Greek in origin, the other Latin; they both mean the same thing—sharing the experience of another. No one will ever be an effective Christian minister who has not the constant intellectual and moral habit of sharing life with his fellow human beings.

From a much wider circle of desirable mental habits we have, then, selected arbitrarily these four, as being necessary to the practice of our profession: truthfulness as the agreement of our minds with what is so; sincerity as the agreement of our ideas with each other; precision as the cultivation of exactness in observation, description and logic; imagination as our sympathetic experience of the life of another. A good sermon, an effective parish visit, a really effective ministry will employ all of these fixed habits of the mind of the minister.

IV

THE MINISTER AS AN EXPERT

By Reinhold Niebuhr

There was a time when the ministry was a highly specialized function. The minister was educated in the classics and in theology in order that he might instruct his congregation in biblical knowledge. If he could add to his theological equipment the virtue of pastoral interest in his flock and the grace of a vital spiritual personal life, he was perfectly equipped for religious leadership. In the Protestant Church at least it was generally assumed that whatever values in society impinged upon religion and whatever social consequences were to be derived from it would be taken care of automatically and inevitably. It was the minister's business to cultivate the springs of moral and spiritual life, serene in the confidence that spiritual power and moral good will would inevitably establish the foundation for right conduct, social peace, and inner serenity.

To-day the matter does not seem quite so simple. The more the forces and values of religion come in conflict with or in relation to the growing mind and conscience of modern society, the more must they justify themselves in ethical and social terms and the more are they proved related through these, not only as basic to, but as

dependent upon them. As religion is stripped of magic it dispenses with the ritualistic specialist who knows how to manipulate the tools of priestcraft in order that cosmic forces may be bent to human will. As religion becomes involved in all other values of society, both as cause and effect, it dispenses too with the specialist in the mystic experience and in theological lore. Since religion as a life and as a force is more than any of the values and forces with which it becomes involved, it cannot dispense with the leader who knows how to help men to achieve a vital spiritual experience; but since the genuineness of the experience and its ultimate validity as a life force depend so much upon the social and moral facts from which it emerges and into which it issues, the minister cannot escape the duty of achieving at least a quasi-expertness in all the fields of thought and life with which religion is associated. Here is a task so great that it makes the modern ministry at once the most challenging and the most impossible of professions. It is easy enough to limit the field and to insist that the minister need only to be a specialist in the moral and spiritual values which are involved in and imperiled by the specialized thought and activity of modern society. The minister need not be an economist, but he must know something about the ethical and spiritual implications of economic activity. He need not be a philosopher or a scientist, but he must know how to justify religious affirmations in the light of

modern learning. He need not specialize in political economy, but he must know his way about in the field of politics. In other words, the modern minister while acquiring specialized knowledge in the field of ethics and theology must be at least somewhat of an expert in almost every other field. To be a truly educated man in a society of undereducated experts, and to preserve the integrity of his spiritual life while he directs spiritual effort into the endless fields of relativities which emerge in all phases of human thought and activity—that is the task to which the minister in the modern world must set himself.

Let us survey this task for a moment. If we begin with the assurance of the goodness of God which lies at the heart of all religion, the minister must know not only how he may help men to a vital personal experience of divine companionship, but he must be able to justify this assurance and this experience in terms of modern knowledge. How can we believe in a good God and loving Father in the face of the evidence which science presents of a world which seems impersonal in its processes and indifferent to personality in its vastest and in its minutest relationships? There is a surprising reaction to mechanism among modern scientists who are discovering that in reality which was not immediately discerned when men first reacted against ancient orthodoxy. The strongest arguments for theism that I know come to-day not from philosophers or theologians, but

from a sociologist, a physicist, and a biologist. The busy pastor does not have the time to go thoroughly into all their treatises, but he is dealing with young people all the time who at college, and even in high school, have their faith imperiled by scientists who claim to have no philosophy, but who do in fact insinuate a very mechanistic philosophy into their teaching. To help these young people requires more than a smattering of philosophy and science.

Perhaps the business of helping people in their personal religious life is outside of the domain of the specialist, even the religious specialist. Religious feeling and experience develop by contagion more than by any expert analysis of their nature, and the man of vital religious life will not fail, even if he is wanting in the achievements of learning. Nevertheless, the minister is not only a personal counselor but the leader who tries to articulate the religious emotions and aspirations of a congregation, and therefore he cannot depend only upon his own spontaneous emotions. It may not be amiss to suggest that the priestly function of the ministry in the modern sense is also an art and a science. Religious emotion is closely associated with æsthetic feeling and the finest kind of public worship demands the touch of the artist and poet. Perhaps it is not altogether accidental that the churches which only yesterday were recognized for their spiritual fervor and evangelistic passion are to-day the very churches which

frequently sink into vulgar theatricality and a superficial emotionalism which lacks the saving grace of spiritual passion. Spontaneous fervor may come and must come to the church for a season, but in the long run religious aspirations must express themselves through the forms created by conscience and culture, by morality and art, or sink into vulgarity.

Perhaps we cannot ask people to become poets and artists as they might become scientists and engineers. The poetic achievement depends upon imaginative endowment, which some men have and some men lack. Nevertheless, allowing for inequality of endowment, there is imagination in all of us which can be developed. A representative of the Barthian theological school recently observed that fundamentalism and modernism were children of the same mother—rationalism. That is not far from the truth. Protestantism has always suffered from a too unimaginative intellectualism which in fundamentalism expresses itself in the insistence that metaphors and symbols shall have exact scientific meaning, and in modernism results in the insistence that they shall be dispensed with if they cannot be exactly defined. Religion is more than poetry, for it assigns cosmic validity to the symbols of feeling, and it is more than art, for it insists that values are real even outside of the world of fancy. Nevertheless, religion is at least art and poetry and cannot be appreciated or developed by those who have no faculty for the

æsthetic. In one sense the problem of the modern religious leader is the problem of satisfying the growing reason of man by scientific precision without losing the moral energy and vitality which the imagination feeds. When dealing with the ineffable, poetry is indispensable. Religion is in a sense an appreciation of life as a whole and life at its best, and it is impossible to appreciate either the whole or the best when we are confined to exact intellectual categories.

Religion is concerned not only with man's reactions to life and the universe, but with the problem of bringing some kind of harmony out of the tumult of his passions, of ordering his multifarious energies around a central loyalty and overcoming his haunting sense of frustration by some final assurance of divine forgiveness which will know how to accept our intentions for our achievements. Here is a problem which is no less difficult but is certainly more simple than many of the other problems of religion. Vital religion, even if unreflective and unsuccessful in larger social areas, is usually automatically effective in unifying personality and giving men the peace and assurance they crave. Nevertheless, even here the minister can make use of knowledge outside his own field. When dealing with so intricate an entity as human personality the minister ought to know all that modern science can teach him about the subtle forces which contend for mastery and the devious devices which make good of evil

and evil of good in the human heart. The minister must, in short, be somewhat of a psychiatrist.

All the problems of the individual soul in its own inner life and in its relationship to the universe are simple, however, when compared to the problem of maintaining ethical and spiritual values in human society. It was a comparatively simple matter to guide moral purpose into moral action when the individual was thought of as a complete and isolated entity. But civilization does not only increasingly moralize religion, but socializes ethics. Real analysis reveals the individual as the product of the society of which he is a part and his every virtue as qualified by the virtues and vices of his society. If he is to achieve the virtue of love in his life, how is he to do so in a society which tempts him to hatred? If he is to aspire to the virtue of honesty, how will he deal with the social injustice which is not incidental, but basic in the organization of his community? It is not impossible to achieve virtue transcending in perfection that which society as a whole has realized. That is, in fact, the business of a Christian. "Be ye not conformed to this world" must be the motto of his action. Nevertheless, every ethical and spiritual value is much more involved in social fact and imperiled by the resistance of society than a highly individualistic Protestantism realized. In the long run it will be impossible to maintain spiritual vigor or to prove spiritual life ethically potent if the institutions of religion do not chal-

lenge more seriously than has been customary not only the casual and incidental moral weaknesses of society, but the moral deficiencies which are at the very basis of its life. To do this requires not only courage, but intelligence. Professor Tawney has made a strong case for the thesis that both the fields of economics and politics emancipated themselves of ethical restraint and insisted on their autonomy largely because they became too complex to be governed by the ethical simplicities of unreflective religion. Sentimental fury will not restore ethical values in industry and international relations. A religious leader who is really to help in guiding the confused conscience of the modern generation must develop a degree of expert knowledge in the field of economic and political relationships. While the church has manifested a commendable interest in larger social issues, though more in the international than in the industrial and economic ones, most of the utterances of the pulpit are characterized by a kind of sentimentality which comes from superficial knowledge. The ideal is never as immediately triumphant or as painlessly successful as the superficial observer is inclined to believe. In the field of industrial and economic relationships particularly, there is such a complete lack of reality in the words of the church that it is taken seriously neither by friend nor foe of the present system. Expert knowledge alone will not make the church a factor in bringing ethical and spiritual values back into the economic

life. Here is, after all, the last bulwark of selfishness, which does not yield easily to the force of the ideal no matter how expertly presented and insinuated into the world's life. The most damning indictment which can be made against modern religion is that it deals too frequently with virtues cultivated in leisure and not in work, with moral excellencies which do not affect the main business of life, but only add a few delightful amenities to veil the essential brutality of life. While expert knowledge is, therefore, not the only weapon which the warrior for the ideal needs, it is nevertheless obvious that in this final battle, which must ultimately decide whether religion in the modern world can be the expression of true devotion to the ideal or only a substitute for it, every spiritual weapon must be used.

The social problem which the church faces and the courage which its solution demands confront us with the final dilemma of the religious expert in modern life. If his first task is to be a quasi-expert in all values which impinge upon religion and morality, his final problem is to dedicate such an equipment to the service of the church and the ideal without being a professional. Every form of specialized knowledge produces its profession and every profession is tempted to exploit its expertness for commercial gain. While there is no great temptation in the ministry to commercialization, though within the limits of its own ideals the temptation is real enough, there is a definite

hazard to its spiritual mission in the minister's professional dependence upon the world, which by every implication of his spiritual mission he is called upon to rebuild. Of course this is no new problem for the minister, but the modern world has complicated it. It is interesting how much men will accept from a parson when he indicts them for their personal delinquencies and how impatient they are with him when he touches upon the sins of society. The reason is obvious enough. Men are never proud of personal aberrations from accepted standards of conduct; but they are very complacent about the moral limitations which are written into the very structure of their customs and ideals. Anyone who takes the gospel of Jesus seriously must inevitably come in conflict with modern civilization, intent as it is upon the very physical advantages and satisfactions which are anathema to the true spirit of the gospel. It is not impossible to do this while being dependent upon the very people who understand the gospel so imperfectly and who gain so many privileges from the very limitations of modern society that they are anxious to preserve the *status quo* inviolate. It is possible to do this, because men are what they are not through malice, usually, but through faulty imagination, and they are not unwilling to listen to a man who has won their confidence even if he takes them upon strange adventures. But while it is possible it is not easy, and the sense of economic dependence does not

make for heroic utterance in the pulpit even if no overt effort is made to circumscribe the pulpit's freedom.

No casuistry can obscure the fact that the professional character of the ministry is a moral hazard. Jesus spoke contemptuously of the hireling, Paul prided himself upon his financial independence of his congregations, and the prophet Amos gloried in the fact that he was an amateur rather than a professional. The modern church, with its educational and pastoral demands, makes the professional ministry a necessity, but the limitations will never be overcome if men who enter it will not regard the professional character of it as a necessary evil. If men enter the ministry even without any commercial ambitions, without any desire for large salaries and emoluments, but if they are haunted by the ambition of professional success, they will never achieve the freedom which the moral task of the modern church requires. If professional success is their goal, they will sacrifice by imperceptible stages the integrity of their soul until they are degraded into innocuous priests who maintain themselves by making religion the harmless adornment of a comfortable life or into genteel lecturers who scorn the mysteries of religion for the more respectable achievements of polite discourse, in which, however, all contentious issues are banned and the "candle light of the obvious is made to illumine the daylight of common experience."

Here, then, is a great task which ought to appeal to both the heroism and the intelligence of the best of our young men. If they would be ministers, let them strive diligently to become experts in religious and moral values, quasi-experts in every field which impinges upon the field of the moral and spiritual ideal, and let them combine with the scientific attainments of the specialist the spiritual independence of the amateur. The latter attainment will cost more denial than the former will cost work, but without it all scholarly achievements become futile.

V

THE PREACHER AND WORLD-WIDE VIEWS

By Francis J. McConnell

There is a good deal of speech to-day about the necessity of the Christian preacher's acquiring world-wide views which arises merely out of the fashion of the time. There is more of the play of fashion in our thinking than we care to admit. Many of our ideas come and go according as the popular whim of the moment dictates. The social psychologist has not yet given us any adequate explanation of the origin and development of our intellectual fashions, but however they arise they are potent while they last. Preachers become very alert in sensing the popular mood of a day or of an hour, and in so speaking as to meet the demands of that hour. I do not complain of this adaptation to popular expectation, for such adaptation legitimately made may contribute directly to an effective ministry.

Some of the intellectual styles have more significance than that of being the fleeting expression of the mood of the hour. If the study of world-wide intellectual and spiritual atmospheres is seriously taken and followed through, it ought to render aid in some definite directions to the clarification

of the essential spirit and genius of the gospel of Christ.

The deliberate attempt by the Christian ministry to face the world-wide implications of the gospel may do something to relieve us of that contradiction which is to-day possibly the most serious hindrance to the spread of Christ's truth. I refer to the contradiction between the essentials of the gospel and the institutional life of men in groups. In the old days before the Reformation the church sought to wield her power over all departments of human life and activity. She tried, with considerable success, to rule the policies of kings in their larger statecraft. She directly fostered education and art, laying down the rules for the training of the mind and for the expression of the artistic spirit. She kept the control of marriage in her own hands. With her doctrine of the "just price" she went down into the market place and mitigated somewhat the injustices of buying and selling. The church did all this, admittedly, in reliance upon arbitrary decree. She had in her hands the power of excommunication, and excommunication meant for him who suffered it the threat of an eternal hell. In those days hell was in men's thinking just around the corner, and excommunication was a quick push thither. The point of view which came with the Reformation changed the attitude toward ecclesiastical authority. Luther's emphasis on justification by faith made religion primarily an affair of the

individual, and soon the logic of such a belief began to work itself out. The shifting of the religious center to the conscience of the individual made it possible for the larger social realms to withdraw themselves more and more from distinctively Christian influences. To be sure, an individual leader might conceive it to be his duty to carry Christian principles into educational or political or international spheres; but with the emphasis so exclusively on individual responsibility the social activities more and more tended to move along according to their own sweet will, or, in actual fact, according to their own bitter will, for the outcome was, indeed, bitterness. Organizational activities in educational, political, and international relationships became secularized, not to say paganized. The church since the Reformation has, by common consent, wrought out some stupendous social reforms, but she has not taken seriously enough the infusion of the group activities with the temper of Jesus. The result is glaring opposition between the way of Jesus and the ways of the massive social organizations of our day. The contradiction is so complete that many earnest students ask if we would not do better to let "the world" go its own way while Christians give themselves to inner contemplation of God. The difficulty here is that we cannot contemplate God long without seeking to contemplate the objects of God's regard, and this leads us to the disturbing question as to whether God is not him-

self contemplating the world from which we are asked to withdraw.

The contradiction is here and we must at least attempt to solve it. A distinguished observer of Chinese affairs has recently said that in his judgment the one hundred foreigners in China most influential as individuals are missionaries—influential through the unselfishness of their lives; but that this influence is balked from any considerable practical effect by the contrast between the unselfishness of the missionaries and the selfishness of the so-called Christian civilizations from which the missionaries come. In a word, the deadliest enemies of missionaries working in foreign lands are back in those home lands from which the missionaries fare forth. The contrast is between the personal devotion of those who seek to live the Christ life and that secular, pagan civilization which, the world-around, contradicts and defies Christianity. We all admit that a militant Christianity will, at least in earthly conditions, always have to meet the opposition between the Christian ideal and the actual practices of the community life of which Christians are a part, but if we become complacent about this contrast, we are in danger of losing our souls. It is well for us to realize that the contradiction is most painful in the longer, wider reaches of world-activity, and that, because of its very extent, it can best be studied on the world-scale. Such study brings us back to our own doorsteps at the

end of the journey, but brings us there with a fresh realization of how far the paths from those doorsteps extend. In fine, such world-studies are magnifying glasses which draw out unforgettably the meanings of the deeds which we do closest to our own homes.

The second reason for the study of world-wide problems by the Christian leader is to be found in the fact that Christian conceptions must be given size before we attain to anything like their final interpretation. I know how easy it is to ridicule size by calling it mere bigness, but size, after all, is an element in Christian truth. By seeking conceptions which hold good throughout the universe we are paying tribute to size. Universality means size. The philosopher who seeks for some unifying principle throughout the universe may not be flattered to learn that he is on the search for something big, but he is trying to seize immensity nevertheless. Newton's doctrine of gravitation for centuries ruled the minds of men partly by the immensity of its sweep; and Einstein's formula, which so many thinkers hail as the highest achievement of abstract reasoning, takes much of its force from the claim of its author that it is applicable to all space-time events.

We must not forget that it is sometimes true that increase of quantity virtually adds new qualities to what is increased, or brings out to our vision qualities which might never appear in small individual units. A glass of ocean water held

up to the light does not betray any hint of the color of that same water when it is part of the multitudinous seas. A mountain range looked at through a distance of fifty miles wraps itself in new glories due just to the volume of atmosphere through which the range is looked upon. I shall say more about quality in a later paragraph; but, quality to one side, quantity itself is needed to set forth the vastness of the gospel. The book of Revelation has always been somewhat of a mystery to me, but I have always felt that I understood at least one element of the author's aim, namely, his desire to find figures of speech big enough to body forth his conception of the gospel of Christ. He tells of thousands, and thousands, and tens of thousands of singers. Inevitably such a thunder of sound makes the song new. He pictures mountains as moving from their bases, and the sky as casting down her stars as a fig tree casteth down untimely figs. We read of an immense army marching to and fro, of multitudes that no man can number standing before the throne, of all the host of the dead standing before God, of the voice of the Son of man as like unto the sound of many waters. Commentators have now and again shrunk from all this as extravagant, but the extravagance itself is suggestive of something essential to the gospel. The salvation of a few individuals would be almost a contradiction in terms. When we reflect upon the greatness of salvation itself, how could that greatness ever be

revealed by a handful of saved souls? For the interpretation of salvation we need masses of mankind. We must have the contribution of every kindred and people and tongue, working together in an all-inclusive unity, before we can see the mightier significance of the good news of the gospel. Anything which stretches the minds of men gives them capacity for understanding Christianity. How mistaken has been the strategy according to which Christian leaders have talked about a minimum of belief while all forms of scientific thinking have been running out to larger and larger terms! The most ordinary scale for measuring the physical universe speaks of the distances between stars as to be computed in "light-years." A light-year is the space which a ray of light, traveling at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second, will traverse in a year. Now, while scientists are using yardsticks like this it will not do for religious thinkers to speak about a minimum of belief. We all gladly admit the value of such search for a minimum when we are striving to strip our beliefs down to their essentials. I do not mean that we need a big creed in the sense of a long assortment of miscellaneous doctrines. I do mean, however, that the essentials should have size. Many beliefs are thoroughly consistent in themselves, but they are not adequate. To use the rather trite illustration, I might stand beside a perfectly built steamboat as it lay at the wharf.

It might be the last word in engineering perfection, but I might not be willing to sail to Europe on it. It might not appear to me to be big enough.

Even with those creations of beauty, whose quality seems to be an end-in-itself, there is something about the beauty suggestive of infinity. Or at least the beauty points out beyond itself. A diamond is a small gem; but if it is a stone of rare beauty, there is a suggestion of infinite depth in its clearness. We need not be terrorized by the immensities of the physical universe if we remind ourselves that the Mind which can seize and measure those immensities is greater than any distances and masses themselves can possibly be. Instead of matter lording it over mind, mind is the true lord of matter. By the fact that mind understands matter mind asserts its superiority.

A third reason for emphasis on the broader view in Christian thinking is the benefit which accrues to the quality of the individual as an individual through such wider social outlook. In the former times when men first began to think about social institutions they conceived of the group as the chief end which the individuals were to serve. The individual was nothing in himself and the group was everything. We can now see well enough that it was only through some such conception as this that human life got any start at all. We can also see the excesses to which such a conception led. It is one of the marvels of history that the people out of whose thought and

life Christianity finally arose were the first to make any notable protest against the overemphasis in such a conception. The Israelites, perched on lofty hills from which they could look down upon the armies of Oriental despotisms passing and repassing on the great roads between Egypt and Assyria, proclaimed what was essentially a new doctrine of the relation of the individual to society. Israel, indeed, believed in Israel as a social unity, but nevertheless thought of the state of which the king was the head as under obligation to be a servant of the people. Out of the long development of Christian individualism there came, on the other hand, an overemphasis on individualism for its own sake quite as mistaken as the emphasis on society for its own sake. Religion was so conceived of as an affair of inner personal life that individuals were, in Christian theology, set apart from one another in unreal isolation. From this altogether fictitious separateness has come an alleged conflict between the individual gospel and the social gospel—as if individual religion were one thing and social religion another.

After human thinking had for ages overemphasized the social groups, and had then for centuries overemphasized the individual, men came to see that society is nothing apart from the individuals that compose it, and that individuals would never even come to individual distinctiveness without contact with other individuals set in a network of social relationships. How much does an indi-

vidual, for example, have to do with creating a people's speech? Speech is, indeed, to a degree the creation of literary geniuses who tower above their fellows; but if any human institution can be called a social creation, that institution is speech. Of all the millions of men living in a particular nation at a given time not over a score or two are likely to make any change in the speech of their nation which will be carried on to the later generations. Speech is made by millions of individuals speaking, and yet speaking in such fashion that their words almost spontaneously move in well-marked channels. Now, here is an infinitely complex instrument which exists for the purposes of individuals, and yet hardly any individual taken by himself has had much to do either with the creation of or the improvement of the instrument.

The soundest conception, then, seems to be that society does not exist as an end-in-itself and that the individuals are not to be considered apart from their fellows. The social relationships bring out new powers from the individuals. With the increase of the size of the social group newer and different forces are brought to bear on individual lives. A single individual taken by himself would not attain to genuinely human life at all. In company with one other he might be capable of long strides toward intelligence. Taken with a hundred others, the strides would be toward finer intelligence still. Let him realize that he is a member of a social group composed of thousands

and still further powers release themselves in him. Let him become a member of a community of millions and he reveals spiritual forces unsuspected as long as he conceived himself to be a member of a community measured only by thousands.

It is the increasing organization of men into large social organisms that can conceivably give the individual his best chance. Of course I am well aware that the ominous increase of size of industrial units at the present time so flattens down the individual that he is likely to lose his distinctiveness. I am well aware too that there is to-day an increasing demand for decentralization, but this does not change the force of my contention that increasing size and complexity of the social organism do give, or at least will one day give, the individual his best chance as an individual. In such organization some activities can best be turned over to agencies employed by groups of men in common, while the more peculiarly distinctive energies of the individual are set loose for the duties which he can himself perform better than anyone else. I know that we are told in the Old Testament that a king who was setting up anew the walls of Jerusalem called upon his followers each to build over against his own door. That was no doubt the best the king could do under the circumstances, but what a wall such a method must have produced! It used to be the ordinance in some cities—perhaps is yet—that after snowstorms each householder was to

clear off the snow from in front of his own property. The result in front of some houses left nothing to be desired, but before other houses, where the shovelers had worked with complete good faith, the passer-by was in danger of breaking his neck. In such case persons who never could learn to clear sidewalks properly were wasting energy which they might have applied profitably somewhere else. In the better organized social groups there is provision that the community do through a common agency what it can best do thus, and leave individuals freer to do what they can best do by themselves.

Now, I do not mean that religious thinking is to be conceived of as a highly specialized function, but there are, nevertheless, those among us who can serve best in a society which makes possible a measure of leisurely reflection in any direction which the individual mind freely chooses for itself. In any worth-while thinking there must be a degree of specialized preparation. We may not ourselves have much sympathy with the practices of mysticism in the Middle Ages, but the mystics did get hold of the truth that religious revelations have to be approached through strenuous preparation. The situation is somewhat analogous to mountain climbing. Even the most expert mountain climber will not, after a half-year of idleness, remark some fine morning, "Let us to-day climb the Matterhorn." He may not be ready for the Matterhorn—with all his previously acquired skill—until after

days or even weeks of unremitting exercise. Moreover, when he reaches the top of the Matterhorn he may, or he may not be, in such physical and spiritual state as to be able to make the best of the view from the summit. Even in the most abstract intellectual pursuits we know that it is only after discipline which leads to an acute sensitiveness and awareness that thinkers are able to catch the vision of the loftier truths. Society is not likely so to organize itself in any near future that the mystics and the seers will have overmuch opportunity to cut utterly loose from the workaday world in which we live, so that there is no imminent danger that what I am now saying will foster an erratic hankering after impractical visions. We do supremely need to encourage such wide social development as will leave men free to "mind their own business," especially when their own business can make possible for them visions of immense benefit to all of us.

This, however, is not quite what I started out to say. I have more especially in mind that the general social plateau of understanding must rise to about a given height in a particular realm before individuals can accomplish any signal achievements in that realm. It is sometimes said that every intellectual discoverer stands on the shoulders of his predecessors. It might also be said that he stands on the shoulders of his contemporaries—and by contemporaries I mean just those who share the ordinary understanding of the

day. The historians who trace the threads of mathematical discovery tell us that the discoveries take place in a logical order, that the second step cannot be taken until the first has been taken, or the tenth taken until the ninth has been taken. This does not quite tell the whole story. Before any step can be taken at all there must be "something in the air" which arouses an interest, or an expectancy, in a particular direction. It may be that a Central African tribe to-day has as much native intellectual force as any equal number of persons from a civilized community, but we should not expect to find a contrivance like a table of logarithms invented by such a tribe. The general level of mathematical interest and knowledge has not risen far enough. There is a textbook in geometry which has substantially been in use for more than two thousand years—Euclid. It is said of Euclid that he gathered up and put into systematic form geometrical propositions which had been commonly discussed in all the Greek cities of his time. We read that the Greeks used to make sand tables in the public squares to satisfy the public enthusiasm for the discussion of geometry. All of which may be apocryphal, but the students of Greek history are right in reminding us that the Greek mathematical discoveries came only after mathematical science among the Greek communities had reached a high level. Certainly, it was so as concerned Greek art. Even if there were only two hundred and fifty thousand persons in

Athens when Greek architecture and sculpture were coming to their best, that quarter of a million of free Greek citizens had attained to such artistic discernment that the boys on the street, even though not destined themselves to be artists, could tell when a building was soundly designed or a statue well carved.

All of this has its bearing upon our religious problem. We never cease to hear the demand for the higher type of individual saintliness in Christianity. Well, the broader the base the higher the summit. The wider the reach of our thought of brotherhood, the finer will be the individual expressions of brotherliness. The larger the terms of our common conceptions of the Divine, the more exquisite will be the shades of meaning which individual saints find in the Divine.

There is at bottom nothing new in this. In all Christian conceptions of an eternal heaven the aim has been to provide for an environment in which human characters can come to their best. A wise man once said that terrestrial conditions cannot do much more than so to start the spiritual plants that they can show their power of survival, but that terrestrial conditions cannot bring out their subtler, more delicate tints. Perhaps the best way we can show ourselves fitted for a fine celestial environment is to seek to make a finer terrestrial environment. To do that we have to change social climates without taking the whole race and all human institutions within our sweep of view.

VI

THE PREACHER AND INDUSTRIAL QUESTIONS

By G. Bromley Oxnam

The preacher is in constant contact with the industrial problem. At this very moment millions of men are toiling. We are here at leisure in this comfortable room, with its glorious stained glass and its symbols directing our attention Godward. They are at sea, battling the storm. They are beneath the earth's surface in the mines. They stand before a thousand different machines in a thousand cities. Next Sunday a small proportion of them will assemble in the churches of the land. They will listen to the preacher. The message they hear may possess educational value; it may bring rest to weary souls; it may solve personal problems or inspire the downhearted to march toward the dawn; it may strengthen the wills of men who struggle for justice; it may put some to sleep. Whatever its effect, the hearers will return to the work-life on the morrow. The impact of that work-life affects their behavior. Professor John Dewey uses a phrase to describe this impact. He speaks of "social-behaviorism." He contends that the social life in which one labors may have much more to do with an individual's behavior

than the secretion of certain glands. The preacher may reveal an ideal way of life to an eager pilgrim, who may in turn pledge himself to walk in that way. He makes this high resolve upon the Sunday. Unfortunately, the lessons taught by a competitive struggle from Monday until Saturday dissipate the effect of the preacher's Sunday message. The result is the work of the preacher is conditioned by the work of the hearer, and the preacher is in constant contact with industry.

In the classroom we have learned much of late of that which Professor Kilpatrick calls "simultaneous learning." A teacher of mathematics, master of his subject matter, may enter a classroom and lecture upon the binomial theorem. He may be a brutal type, who in his egotism bullies his students. He may be dressed in slovenly fashion. His material may be presented in a disorderly manner. And the students, who may be learning something of the theorem under discussion, simultaneously learn much of domineering ways, of slovenly habits of dress, and of hodge-podge methods of organizing classroom material. The worker of hand and brain, the laborer and the manager, learn much more than the mere technique of a particular industrial operation. The preacher may discuss co-operation. The worker in a competitive order learns of struggle. The preacher may call upon the strong to bear the burdens of the weak. The executive notes a competitor, perhaps weak and unfit, file a petition

in bankruptcy. The preacher talks of the uttermost worth of the down-most man. Laborer and manager alike face the terrible specters of old age, unemployment, sickness. Are the people of the pew learning more from pulpit or from "simultaneous" learnings of industry? No matter what the answer may be as to percentage learning, one fact is certain, the preacher is in constant contact with industry.

If it be that the preacher recognizes this basic fact, he will no doubt turn his attention toward the industrial problem. At the very outset he must recognize the baffling complexity of the problem. He must beware lest he give allegiance to the easily repeated panacea. The simpler the remedy the greater its fallacious nature will be found. What constitutes the complexity of the problem from the standpoint of the preacher? First, there is a complicating psychological factor. There are pictures in the minds of worker and employer alike. These pictures call forth emotional responses of varying sorts when the preacher discusses industry and uses such terms as "worker," "employer," "union," "blacklist," "collective bargain," and the like. If the employer has had the sad experience of witnessing workers soldier on the job, of dealing with men who are not interested in their labor, men who will take as much and give as little as possible, before long he develops that kind of conception of the workman, and that picture is present whenever the preacher speaks the

word "laborer." It is equally true if a workman has been bullied by some foreman who is more brutish than possessed of leadership, when he thinks of employer or boss, the picture that is in his mind is that Czarlike individual. Thus when the preacher speaks, as my friend Crane put it so finely the other day, he may have a blue idea in his mind. There is a yellow one in the mind of the person to whom he speaks. And, instead of the person with the yellow idea getting the blue idea spoken by the preacher, the fact of the matter is that the blue mixes with the yellow and the result is green. The preacher must recognize and make allowance for these mental pictures or stereotypes that exist in the minds of men when the industrial question is discussed. He must expect different responses.

In the second place, it is difficult to face the problem simply because the labor movement is a living thing. What is said about the industrial life of to-day may be accurate enough, but it may be untrue to-morrow. To illustrate the living nature of the movement, may I refer you for a moment to an article written by Savel Zimand, entitled "Where Are the Wild Men of Yesterday?" In this article he recounts a convention that was held in Copenhagen in 1910. To this assembly came representatives from the various labor movements of the world, men representing both the left and right wings and the center bodies. There were the Conservative Socialists, the Trade

Unionists on the right, while over on the far left were the Communists. The observer looked upon these leaders and said, "These are wild men." Who could have predicted that within fifteen years one hundred of these "wild men" would have become cabinet officers in European governments and twelve of them premiers of the governments of Europe? Among those present was Jean Jaures, whose brilliant oratory and fascinating imagination had caught the ear and heart of a thousand French audiences. This man was to be buried within a few years in the Pantheon with military honor. Here too was Kier Hardy, child laborer, who was indeed the power behind the organization of the British labor movement. Here also was Ramsay MacDonald, in 1920 despised and rejected of men—a pacifist, in 1922 the leader of the king's opposition, in 1924 the first labor premier of Great Britain. Branting of Sweden was present, a man born to the purple, one who had attended school with the king of Sweden, one who chose the lot of agitator, who wore prison stripes six times, later to become the premier of Sweden! Vandervelde of Belgium, the signer of the Locarno Treaty, was there. So too was a German labor leader, a man who had come from saddle-maker to eminence in the workers' movement. In 1921, eleven years later, I had the privilege of meeting this man. We did not call upon a labor leader, nor upon a saddle-maker. We went to the White House of Germany and met

Frederick Ebert, the first president of the German republic. Here too were Lenin and Trotsky, whose views, at opposite poles from those of Ramsay MacDonald and the conservatives in the socialist ranks, were within seven years to lead the Russian people from Czarism to Bolshevism. The industrial movement from the standpoint of labor is a living thing, and it behooves the preacher to recognize that fact and be certain of his data before he speaks.

In addition, there are difficulties because of the many approaches to the industrial problem. One may approach it historically, tracing the development of the present industrial order from the coming of the machine to this hour when man seems to possess the power to lift the burdens off the backs of men and give them opportunity for abundant living. One may approach the problem philosophically, asking the questions: "What is industry? What is its purpose? What are the principles around which it is organized?" The problem may be approached descriptively, wherein one seeks to describe the industrial centers of the country, the nature of the activities carried on, and the effect of such activities upon the populace in these centers. Or one may approach this problem from the standpoint of the engineer, who is dreaming amazingly of an industrial order with waste eliminated. Read, for instance, the report of the Federated American Engineering Society signed by Mr. Herbert Hoover and note the

progress in standardization. There is a suggestion even that it may be possible, through the development of great distributing centers of electric energy, to take advantage of the difference of time so that the peak loads that now come once or twice a day may be distributed over several portions of the day, since, through these great distributing centers, one may serve the Eastern seaboard at a certain time, the Middle West later, and the mountainous regions later on! One may approach the problem from the standpoint of religion and ask, "What is the effect of industry upon life and upon the apprehension of spiritual values?" From the standpoint of labor one may look upon industry as necessary to bread. There is no easy answer to the industrial question. The preacher who accepts the propagandist solution of such a complex problem of this kind presents the type of individual whose voice will not be heard by men who know this problem calls for the keenest of scientific intelligence ruled by the highest of ethical idealism.

I have tried to point out that the preacher is in constant contact with the industrial question and that, because of its complexity, it is exceedingly difficult to speak with authority in the field. In the third place, the preacher who has eyes to see and ears to hear finds that down beneath world-wide labor movements, whether you study them in Russia, Germany, France, China, the United States of America, Mexico, wherever you go,

there is a fundamental spiritual urge. It is the yearning of mankind for a more abundant life. Sometimes it expresses itself in blind rage; sometimes, in intelligent demands for a better day; but deep beneath the varying expressions is a fundamental urge, the desire of men for life abundant. This urge has become articulate. The worker no longer leans upon the hoe. He does not gaze upon the ground. He looks us squarely in the eye and asks: "Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow? Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?" This monstrous thing, distorted and soul-quenched, would be touched again with immortality. He yearns for the upward-looking and the light and would have rebuilt within his soul the music and the dream. Edwin Markham long since sensed the spiritual yearning beneath the world-wide industrial movement. Sidney Lanier voiced it in his poem, "The Symphony." He pictures the people who look upon social ills and, with disdainful gesture, clamp the nose and blink the eye, declaring "Swinehood hath no remedy." These people, yearning for a bit of heaven on earth, will lift their children from the sty to the stars. Appraise it how you will, explain as you may, you must face the fact of this fundamental spiritual urge. The preacher must recognize the nature of this desire and direct his energies to the high task of turning this urge into channels that lead to the Promised Land.

The preacher must recognize likewise that this

spiritual urge manifests itself in a score of conflicting economic philosophies. Some of them may help mankind in its search for the land flowing with milk and honey; others are likely to lead us into the desert. In his approach to these proposals that have expressed the yearning of men for fuller and more complete life and upon which they rely to achieve it, it would be well for him to distinguish three factors in these expressions: First, he must ask, "What is the goal of this particular movement?" Second, "What is the economic program it relies upon to achieve the goal?" Third, "What is the method it proposes to use to put the program into practice, through which it hopes to achieve the goal?" If he will make this distinction, he will save himself not a little difficulty. The all too convenient use of the word "Red" to describe the varying expressions of this spiritual urge is perfectly absurd. The preacher must understand the constituent elements in the labor movement. When he uses the term "communist," he must be able to state the goal of the communist movement, what it is the communist has in mind, and understand full well what is meant by the slogan-goal, "The abolition of the exploitation of man by man." He must be sufficiently versed in the economics of communism to be able to come to his own conclusion as to whether or no there are fallacies in the communist program. Personally, I believe there are fundamental economic fallacies in the eco-

nomics of communism. However that may be, one must know where they lie. Putting a communist in jail and not answering his idea with a better one is no way to do away with the fallacies that lie in this proposal. Again, he must recognize the fact that the communist is perfectly willing to use war methods, to establish dictatorship if necessary, in order to enthrone his program which he trusts will achieve his ideal. Naturally, the preacher finds a method in this proposal that crosses the method of Jesus of Nazareth. He may find an economic program that he cannot accept. Nevertheless, beneath the communist movement is that same spiritual urge, that same desire for more abundant living. This urge must be redirected.

He must be acquainted with the program of British labor. This is a program at opposite poles from the communist movement, a program that abhors the method of revolution and of violence, a program that is much more opportunist and frankly willing to face the facts of the social order instead of building upon economic dogma. Here is a goal wherein the leaders talk of the establishment of a national minimum standard of life and the democratic control of industry. Ramsay MacDonald once said: "We are not out to fill the stomachs of men as a primary goal; insofar as their stomachs are empty, we will fill them. What we seek to do is to fill the souls of men."

In our own country the I. W. W. movement is

found. The preacher must know what it is these men seek, what is the method they rely upon and the program through which they seek to achieve their goal. In his studies of this group he will come to see, as Carleton Pasher saw in his *Casual Laborer and Other Essays*, that the syndicalist or I. W. W. philosophy is developed where industrial conditions are the worst. You do not find syndicalism among the railway engineers. You find it among the maintenance of way men, the harvesters of our seasonal crops, the lumberjacks of the Northwest, the muckers in the mine. These casual laborers, who have no homes, no permanent residence and therefore no vote; who own no property and hence have no stake in the community; these men, with instinctive wants unfulfilled, yearning for a full and complete life, find themselves in rebellion against the present order. It would appear that the preacher who believes in the religion of Jesus would direct his attention to removing the conditions that produce this philosophy instead of thinking he had solved the problems by throwing an occasional syndicalist into jail. He must get at the spiritual urge that is beneath this, direct that urge into channels that are likely to lead to fruitful lands. Then there is the trade unionist whose philosophy is at the opposite pole from that of the syndicalist. The syndicalist believes that we are organized upon a war basis, that there is nothing in common between the employer and employee. The trade

unionist, on the other hand, believes that there is much in common between the two. He takes the capitalist system for granted and believes that that which is common between the two ought to be regulated by a contract. He insists both groups ought to be organized and, through representatives of their own choosing, work out the matters that have to do with wages, hours, and other mutual affairs. Trade unionism may not be the way out, since it posits two groups, each interested in getting as large a share as possible from the product of industry, and thus has within it elements of conflict. These are the problems that the preacher must recognize. But more fundamental is the fact that these programs, philosophies, methods, are but expressions of a deep-seated desire of mankind for abundant life.

The preacher, while prophet, is nevertheless the leader of a church. What is the church's duty in this matter of industry? First of all, as a well-known leader has suggested, the church must become the teacher of the principles of conduct. It must insist that our economic processes be governed by ethical criteria. It is not for the preacher to attempt to tell the man who owns a factory how to run that factory. He does not possess the technical ability to advise a man regarding the industrial process, but it is for the preacher to lay hold upon the ethical ideals of Jesus and insist that he has a perfect right to demand that the economic processes shall be

judged by these criteria. It is not enough, however, that the preacher present the principles of conduct. He must insist that the ethical principles be tested out in concrete situations. It is a very easy thing to proclaim an abstract ethical principle. It is a vastly different matter to test that principle out in actual conduct. It is here that the difficult problems arise. It is said that the preacher must not take sides. True enough, it is not his duty to become allegiant to one group or the other as such, but it is his duty to insist that the ethical ideals be practiced in definite situations. It may appear that he is partisan, but he knows he is but standing by his ethical ideal and insisting upon its practice. He must give the lie to the statement that economic necessity governs in the economic world.

As he insists upon the principle of the supremacy of personality, he must be willing to have that principle tested out in all our relationships. There will be lessons that labor will need to learn. It must state its goal in other than materialistic terminology. It must develop some other unifying force than an enemy. It must rely upon the methods of education. Just as truly there are lessons that employers must learn. We must test out our theories of property rights by ethical criteria. We must face up to the implications of our present system of income. Ought income to be on the basis of service rendered? If so, can we work out some scheme wherein that idea may

function? Are property rights to be conditioned by the uses that are made of property? Is property a social trust? When we use the term "stewardship," what do we mean? Ought ethical ideals to apply to the acquisition of and title to property as well as to its disposition? The church must, therefore, be first of all the teacher of the principles of conduct. In the second place, it must be the voice of judgment. It is not enough for the church to simply proclaim the ideal. Where social sin is found, it must voice the same condemnatory judgment it has proclaimed when individual sin has been found. This does not mean that the winsome note will not be heard. It does not mean that the preacher will be chiefly a denunciatory prophet of doom. But it does mean that the prophet's message must be heard and that the church becomes a voice of judgment. In the next place, the church must be the herald of the new order. It must hold before men the ideal of a new society—the kingdom of God upon the earth.

We have seen that the preacher is in constant contact with industry. We have noted the complexity of the problem and have noted the fact that there is a spiritual urge beneath the movement and that this urge manifests itself in a score of varying philosophies, contradictory programs, and conflicting methods. We have discussed the function of the church in these fields. We now face the query, "What is the way out?" Professor

Harry F. Ward has suggested that we must choose one of three proposals. There is first of all the proposal of the reformer. This is like putting new wine in old bottles, sewing a patch upon an old garment. It is argued that we are organized at the present time around principles that do not square with the ideals of Jesus. Reform is not likely to succeed. He suggests there is another choice—revolution. But revolution in its very essence violates the ideals that are at the heart of the religion of Jesus. Jesus used truth to free, love to transform. Revolutionists would use force to free, hate to transform. It creates in the minds of those who use it reliance upon force to gain ends that may or may not be worth while and develops the type of individual who wrecks that which has been set up after it has been set up by use of the same method. The revolutionist is unwilling to await the forces of education and democracy. It is not an acceptable proposal. There is the third choice and that is regeneration. It seems to me the regenerating message of the religion of Jesus, that has brought transformation to individual souls, may just as truly be brought to bear upon society, to the end that the social order may be motivated by new ideals and the social group regenerated even as the individual has been transformed in days gone by.

VII

THE PREACHING OF JESUS—AN EXAMPLE

By Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes

Christ is continually presented by preachers to their people as an example of their spiritual and practical living; and it must seem strange that he is not oftener presented by the preachers themselves to themselves as an example for their own spiritual and professional work. We are told to follow in his footsteps—to the home, to the school, to the feast, to the funeral. Thomas à Kempis, and James Stalker, and Charles M. Sheldon seek to point out how we may follow him in many of life's ways. But Christ's path led frequently to the place where, at some extemporized pulpit on the hillside or at the conventional desk in the synagogue, he preached the love and grace of the heavenly Father. Why may not preachers learn to follow him there, to take him as an exemplar for those holy moments when they stand as prophets of the everlasting order, or as mediators between time and eternity?

For let it be noted that, speaking in a strictly human way, it was by preaching that Jesus made God known. He who was "the Word" used words as the vehicles for the infinite truth. He

spoke to audiences, great or small, and so he started influences that modified and molded all centuries. Moreover, he did this by the *uttered* word. It is often pointed out that he left no manuscripts. The only time he is represented as writing was when with his finger he wrote the sentence of a sinning woman upon the forgetful sands of the earth. Though he himself penned no books, yet his spoken word evoked many libraries and gave more than a semblance of fact to the splendid hyperbole in the last verses of John's Gospel. Jesus preached. Immediately some men began to see the Father; and the human race started to climb steadily toward God. Classify them as sermons or as lessons, as one may elect, it still remains true that the proclaimed words of Jesus Christ brought saving power to mankind and gave a mighty and gracious curve to the stream of history. It would seem, therefore, like professional folly if we did not give close and reverent study to his example as a proclaimer of his own gospel. All Christian preachers should learn how to follow the Preacher of Galilee.

In the earnest effort to do this it is not necessary that we should lose ourselves in dogmatic theology. Our thinking may perform a sacred sort of kenosis, in which Christ is asked, for our sakes, to empty himself of "equality with God," in order that he may take upon himself the form of a preaching "servant." We thus bring his example over to those nearer limits within which we must work.

We study him inside the ranges that are imitable by ourselves. Our personal faith ceases not to view him as the Word that was "in the beginning," that was "with God," that "was God"; but our preaching purpose seeks him as the user of those words that fell graciously into time and visited with redemptive power the hearts of limited and living men. With this plain and frank restraint set upon our aim, let us study the preaching of Jesus under the guidance of four great nouns—Naturalness, Clearness, Personalness, and Vitalness.

I

By Naturalness we have in mind something that may appear superficial and that still relates itself to one of the deepest qualities of the preaching life. There is an element of necessary parade in our profession. Our sanctuaries are built, like that of Nazareth, so that "every eye in the Assembly" may be "fastened" on the preacher! The passing from one part of the pulpit to another is for many of us a self-conscious process. It is, after all, a wonderful thing to be the visual center of a thousand eyes, the vocal center of a thousand hearers. When a man's work has this public side, he may yield to a shrinking abasement that loses authority, or to a bold affectation that loses sincerity. As our memories review the preaching of our Lord, we receive neither of these impressions. Showing the real dignity of the

Heaven-sent Ambassador, he had none of the false assurance of the self-sent delegate. In the proclaiming of his message he kept the balance between humility and confidence

Without question one of the subtle temptations of the preacher lies in this region. We do not now discuss that self-conscious timidity which God must find it very easy to forgive, or which he may even approve. Yet how far anything like a pulpit pose must be from the spirit and example of the preaching Christ! We have all known men who were beautifully human, on the street or in the parlor, but who became rigidly artificial on the holy platform. Their countenances changed, and not for the better. Their voices changed, and not toward harmony. Their manners changed, and not in the direction of grace. The sepulchral claimed what ought still to have been living! The ghostly captured what was not yet disembodied! There is a sense in which it is almost as bad to fall from nature as it is to fall from grace! Indeed, it may be questioned whether an artificial behavior in preaching does not involve both sins!

Overseas somewhere there is a tombstone that bears this epitaph—"John Jones, Born a Man, Died a Grocer." The obituary loses the man in his trade! Humanness sinks into professionalism. In a wrong way the person is swallowed up in the task. In the Buddhist ordination ritual this question is asked of each candidate: "Art thou a human being?" Of course the meaning is not

just what we are now presenting. Yet we may well lift the question, literally, over into our own profession. If the power of the true priest lies in his nearness to God, so does his power lie in his nearness to men. Our faith does not call us to be less than men, or more than men, but, rather, to be just men at their highest and best. A dehumanized preacher is always, in so far, an inefficient preacher. The gospel of sincerity does not permit us to be hypocrites even in our vocal organs! Nor false in our gestures! Nor insincere in our laughter or tears! Any departure from an honest tone or an honest manner is a departure from Christ.

This we shall quickly see if we bring the case into his presence. We cannot think of him as engaging in pretentious artifices. If it may be said that he had all poise, it may likewise be said that he had no pose! We revolt from the suggestion itself. The atmosphere of Christ's preaching was so natural, so true, so unaffected, that we shrink even from saying that it was so. His speech carried the credential of an infinite sincerity. There is no hint of the professional air. Someone has said that it was impossible to think of Christ in khaki! Is it any more possible to think of him in a clerical uniform? And if one's imagination may go thus far, it surely is impossible for us to think of him as approaching the throngs with orotund affectations or with mesmeric gestures! The Master of all sincerity may well teach

us that it is ours to speak unlike the scribe, in that we are not enslaved by the conventional; and unlike the Pharisee, in that we are not victimized by outward tricks, but that rather we gain our words from the very fountains of reality.

We may give a moment's consideration to a somewhat different type of naturalness in the preaching of Jesus, namely, that it took the near-at-hand objects in nature and made them the reminding servants of his own instruction. He literally filled that outer world in which his disciples lived with memories of himself and of his truth. After they heard him lilies had more beautiful meanings. His followers found themselves instinctively looking at the foundations of houses. From him coins gained other inscriptions. Vineyards, with their vines and branches, were changed into sanctuaries. Fields wherein the sheep were fed, or mountains whereon the sheep wandered, suggested lessons of the saved and the lost. The mother hen, clucking noisily and scratching eagerly for the food for her young, illustrated an infinite heart that brooded over a city of doom or of hope. Where can one end this list? The reach of his illustrations reveals something like an encyclopedia. Some of us modern preachers flee to our abstractions and have not yet caught his hint, that our world can be somewhat filled with reminders of his gospel. The minister who preached to his audience of commuters on the scripture, "Apart from me ye can

do nothing," and fastened the text to their railroad ticket-books, with the words, "Worthless, if Detached," was approaching one of the preaching secrets of his Lord.

II

The second characteristic of the preaching of Jesus is Clearness. He dealt with themes that were as high as God, as deep as eternity, and as wide as humanity; yet he kept a divine simplicity. In truth, this simplicity is so simple that it tends to hide itself, or else it becomes hidden for us under its own familiarity. The men who are afraid of putting their messages into concrete pictures and stories will not receive much encouragement from the Master-Preacher. In the highest sense he was an anecdotal preacher. Two sons, two women, two houses, and ninety and nine sheep appear in his discourses. He did not deal with labored abstractions, nor with subtle metaphysics, nor even with ordered syllogisms. He dealt with life, and with its great yearning instincts. Because he talked about life, the people who were living life received more life. His sermons were clear because they found men where men dwelt.

All this has a bearing upon the most promising field for our instruction. A study of much preaching will convince us that we are often unfair to childhood and youth. We prepare our sermons for adults and then insist that the children should wait upon our ministry. There is the story of the

boy who was compelled by his elders to read Pope's "Essay on Man." He did not get even the title correctly and looked up duly with the complaint, "It may be very 'Easy on Man,' but it is awfully hard on a boy." Then there is the like tale of the little girl who glanced pathetically from the study of her Catechism and asked if there were not a "Kittychism"! The preparation of our sermons with the children in our minds will not only lead us to deal more efficiently with the hope of the church, it will also help us to fit our messages more fully to our older hearers. The most of them are not scholars. The college graduate is in an almost inconceivable minority. Years ago a New England clergyman began the custom of preaching a seven-minute sermon to the children; then they were dismissed, and he preached half an hour to adults. His deacons waited upon him and asked that he preach entirely to the children because they themselves were getting so much more help out of his briefer and simpler discourses! One can understand why it was that when Jesus spoke, there was likely to be "a little lad" present, or a child whom he could set "in the midst" of the elders. If God ordains wisdom out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, the speaking of Christ would show that he also ordained wisdom for their hearing.

Years ago a classmate reviewed certain papers that had been read in a college class. One young writer was guilty of the "sesquepedalian heresy."

She felt that to seem learned and to be efficient she must use a large vocabulary. So she chose Latin and Greek derivatives and passed by those shorter and more nervous Anglo-Saxon words that go so directly to the mark. The next week this classmate criticized by mimicry—giving apparent praise, in part, and yet bringing cutting criticism, as follows: "The ponderous vocabulary and the plenteous verbosity characterizing this pedantic production excessively stimulated our psychological processes in order to achieve a successful assimilation of the conceptions presented." The language is correctly framed, and the meaning is accurately stated! Yet the sentence calls more attention to itself than it does to its purpose—unless, indeed, the purpose be jocular! Can one imagine such immensities as coming from the lips of the Galilæan? "I am the light of the world"—how the monosyllables stand out in simple clearness! Some of you have seen the twenty-third psalm made over until the Shepherd and the sheep were hidden by the very language intended to reveal them. Not so will we learn Christ.

Oddly enough, there is near at hand an illustration, in contrast, which may be used without discourtesy. Long since an eminent preacher and educator delivered in Chicago a sermon to such an audience as usually gathers in a strong city church at the Sunday-morning service. This lecturer has read every word of that discourse. The theme was "The Person of Christ." The division

was threefold, as follows: 1. Pleromatic humanity; 2. Pleromatic divinity; 3. Hypostatic union. We shall not embarrass any of the learned theological professors here present by asking them for interpretations! Neither shall we discuss the question whether a preacher has a right to talk so to men and women who are weary with the work of the week. Let all this remain as an inquiry in pulpit casuistry! But let it be said with emphasis that Jesus Christ never preached like that. How did he preach? Can we forget that we have ever before heard certain words, and can we allow them to come to us now like the breath of a new spring morning? Consider a part of Christ's great discourse, perhaps the one that makes the most general appeal, and then say whether we can find its equal in an appeal that bases itself, in part at least, upon utter simplicity?

"And he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

In this word of Jesus there is no pleromatic humanity; no pleromatic divinity; no hypostatic union! Yet it represents the clearness of his approach to the minds and hearts of his listeners. It is the duty of the preacher not merely to speak so that men may understand, but so that they must understand, if they have even slight spiritual purpose in listening. At the close of those Lord's Days when we have the honest feeling that we have not made the message plain, it will be good for us to steal away to the gospel stories so that we may get our lesson from the simplicity that was in Christ.

III

The third quality was Personalness. The Master-Preacher dealt with throngs; and there is no

evidence that he despised numbers, even though in weariness he occasionally sought the lake and the desert. But there is more than one evidence that he sometimes left the throngs that he might devote himself to the audience of one. It is an interesting study of his method, to note how often he pulled one listener out of the crowd and gained that one as a spiritual trophy and recruit. Some of his most wonderful messages were given to the single heart—to Nicodemus, to Zacchæus, to the woman at the well. The crowd does have its peril for us. That barricaded pulpit may not make us bold. That formal code that prevents interruption may not make us direct. That listener yonder may hear us publicly many times; but if he hears us not privately, he may have a right to apply to us an ugly adjective!

Even in the training of his "disciples whom he called apostles," Jesus did not omit the individual method. John is perhaps the most misunderstood of the intimate group. There hangs in a minister's study an alleged picture of the beloved disciple, a picture brought from Italy. It is a beautiful thing, but it is scarcely true. When John came into our Lord's band Jesus called him "a son of thunder." But the picture holds no hint of thunder! Later John wished to call down lightning upon certain Samaritan villagers who were not hospitable to his Teacher! This picture never would suggest lightning! Still later John joined his mother in a request for a prominent seat in the

approaching kingdom. This picture shows no overweening ambition. But Jesus did take the son of thunder, and of lightning, and of leaping ambition through a tuition that made him finally the gentle centenarian of the Ephesian Church, leaning upon the stalwart arms of the Elders and saying, week by week, "Little children, love one another." The Preacher's personal program conquered! Who does not have in his church a son of thunder? "Boanerges" was not a lonely peculiarity of the first century and the first apostolic college; and he is usually transformed only by those individual contacts that take him into gardens of sorrows and up to mountains of transfiguration.

It was thus with Peter also. One can hear Christ's quick and sure estimate of the impulsive disciple. "Thou art Simon—shifting sand! Shifting sand! But I will make thee a rock!" It is a rather long journey on to the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi; yet the day came when an august confession about the Son of the living God was followed by the edict, "Thou art a rock." In a way it is the business of the preacher to take the shifting sand of human nature and form it into rock! Or, if another figure from natural history be not too noticeable, it is his duty to change invertebrates into vertebrates! These transfigurations are not apt to come by formal and public preaching alone. John and Peter are not thus fashioned for the apostolate. One of the genuine

temptations of the modern preacher, in his thronged and hurried life, is to lose out of his program that spirit of personalness that even after the resurrection appeared on the borders of the lake and gave to Peter and John the renewed touch of their Lord's own intimate life, sealing them both to his eternal kingdom of grace and glory.

IV

The fourth mark of the preaching of Jesus was Vitalness. We need not now move off into dogmatism. Let the theological explanation be what it may, it is still true that a strange power went with the words of Christ. He himself said of them, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Someone has said, in a metaphor from which we may shrink, "The words of Christ are vascular; if you cut them, they will bleed." There was something *living* in his truth.

Frequently we must all engage in a wondering inquiry about magnetism—that subtle power of holding men by presence and by speech. We have discovered that it is not always related to character. Some rascals seem to possess it in abundance. It is not always related to accurate and fine intellect; some men of mediocre mind are its possessors. Nor is it always related to a great spiritual mood, holding the life in brief sincerity, or keeping it in thraldom to Christ. Some truly religious men appear not to secure

the strange gift. It seems an elusive thing, perhaps providentially hidden so that men may not be tempted to seek it for themselves, and to join the higher but equally doubtful order of Simon Magus!

Doubtless our human search may somewhat uncover its meaning in this statement: It may consist in the power of putting our souls into our words! When this happens a little soul may do big work. We have all known men who were rather sluggish and dull in speech until some great cause shook their hearts into their sentences! Then deep answered unto deep. One said long ago of a well-known reformer, "Usually he was rather listless and uninteresting as a preacher; but when he became mad, he could speak like a flaming angel." Something like that we have all beheld—the brook turned into a torrent, the zephyr into a whirlwind! The inmost and utmost mind and heart were called forth into a message; and, as the accounts of early Methodist revivals used to put it, "The slain were many."

Let it be reverently declared that with Christ there seemed to be the strange identification of himself with his truth. It may be said that he did not merely give a gospel; he was the Gospel. He did not only speak the truth; he could say, "I am the Truth." He was not separated from the things he said. His own life poured into them so that they never seemed to hang in the mid-air of soliloquy or meditation. They went from

Person to person—because the Person became again an incarnate Word! The mystery lies beyond us, as we may gladly confess. But the mystery in this very form approaches near to a creed. Ere we know it the Preacher becomes a Saviour.

There are several illustrations of what we have in mind. One will suffice for underscoring the main matter. When Jesus preached on earth more than half of the people to whom he spoke were slaves. The vast evil of human bondage showed itself on all sides. Men have often commented on the fact that Jesus did not directly attack the evil of slavery. Whatever one may conceive to be the explanation of this form of silence, it is yet true that Jesus' words and spirit started a campaign that could have but one result —emancipation. Some may say that the Golden Rule is a glittering generality; others may say that its appeal is not to leaden instincts. Yet that Rule entered into contest with the rule over men's souls; and we all know that, though the campaign was long and hard, the result was as certain as the truth of God.

The young minister who seeks to prepare a sermon on the Golden Rule is apt to find himself in several kinds of trouble. One is that the word is so simple that its amplification seems difficult; another that an essential part of the problem is to take iron hearts and make them over by a divine alchemy into the metal of the Rule itself.

But there is a third, though minor problem—that of assessing credit for the simple principle or the simple phrasing of the Rule, as it comes to us. Perhaps we had thought the sentence was strictly original with Jesus, and that when he uttered it he said it first, and so declared what every good man had thought but what no person had ever before expressed. Then we make the discovery that the Rule in a negative form can be found in the maxims of Confucius, as well as in the poetry of Plato; and that it can be found in the teachings of Hillel in a form that somewhat approaches the positive. This may lead to spiritual confusion.

Relief comes to us when we consider the statement of David Swing that the glory of a truth lies not so much with the man who first utters it as with the man who first gives it power, even as the glory of the discovery of America lies more with Columbus than with the Northmen because *he* did not leave the continent sleeping dully upon the bosom of the seas, but started the hosts to marching across its wide fertilities. Applied to the Golden Rule, the meaning is plain. Confucius uttered it, and it slept in his maxims. Plato uttered it, and it nestled down in his poetry. Hillel uttered it, and many of you learned that only to-day! Jesus uttered it in constructive form and it arose from its palsy and began to leap, and walk, and praise God. It started immediately into a contest with slavery. Slowly it won. By the end of the first Christian century there was a ritual

for the freeing of slaves. By the end of the second century certain officeholders of the church were not allowed to keep slaves. Duly the Rule crossed the English Channel and made captives of Wilberforce, and Clarkson, and of a whole people, until no bondsman dwelt beneath the Union Jack. Then it leaped the Atlantic Ocean, lodged in the hearts of Lovejoy, Garrison, Phillips, Lincoln, Grant—and wrought so amazingly that directly four million sable faces were touched by the light of freedom, and four million voices, with the unctuous melody of a race, were chanting the songs of liberty. Did the words of Confucius, or Plato, or Hillel achieve that gracious reform? Who will so claim? Verily it was rather the word of the Preacher of Galilee who crowded himself into his utterance and made it a living and liberating thing. Jesus vitalized the Golden Rule and made it the regiment of a conquering God.

We repeat the early assurance, that the effort has been to speak only of the characteristics of Christ's preaching that are imitable by ourselves. We can be natural, avoiding artificialities and affectations. We can be clear, freeing ourselves from those complexities of speech that hide the truth. We can be personal, refusing to become victims of the pride of crowds. We can be vital, pouring ourselves into our messages until men recognize the passionate idiom of the whole world's heart. If we are to do these four things, we must frequently turn away from all the minor

homiletics and seek the words and works of the Great Master. Most of all, if we find ourselves imprisoned by any of the modern Herods of our work, we can take for our own, even professionally, the question of John the Baptist, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" only to receive the sacred reply of our Exemplar, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Or if in the early passion of our own ministry we wish to catch the early passion of his, we may follow him on the Sabbath day to the Nazareth synagogue and hear him say in the splendid quotation from the greatest of the prophets, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach." So following him truly, we may be permitted to say by our influence, if not by our speech, to many a waiting audience, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

VIII

PREACHING THE WORD

By Henry H. Crane

The preaching profession is unquestionably difficult, baffling, complex. It implies proficiency in so many different fields. Everything from sentence structure to spiritual sensitiveness, from elocution to ethics, from morality to metaphysics, is obviously involved. Art, science, literature, to say nothing of all the other branches of learning, are supposed to be fairly familiar to him who truly deserves the high privilege of occupying a Christian pulpit. Every aspect of life may legitimately lay some claim to his attention, since the enlargement of life is his main aim. No wonder we have been warned, and so very wisely, against the grave danger of any oversimplification of the problem of the preaching ministry! The task is as involved, perplexing and encompassed with difficulties as life itself.

And yet, despite all this, from one all-important point of view, it is a fairly simple affair, after all. For the Christian preacher has not two jobs, nor ten, nor twenty; he has but one thing to do—he must "preach Christ!" This is his sovereign prerogative, his unique mission. Always and in all ways he is to proclaim the Good News of Christ. With the famed preacher named Paul, he must

be able to say with glad and positive conviction, "This one thing I do!" And when he is wooed by the thousand and one seductive appeals to do anything other than this, the heart of him must cry out, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" This supreme passion that made Paul "determined not to know anything among" men, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," was not only the master motive that gave him such superlative power as a preacher; it was, and ever is, the one great integrating principle unifying and simplifying the whole perplexing problem of preaching.

But what, we may ask, does it mean to "preach Christ"? Why is it so greatly important? And how may it best be done? These are not mere academic questions for pedants to theorize about. They are issues so vital that they strike at the very heart of the whole preaching problem. To be able to answer them, even measurably well, is to make mighty progress in the mastery of this most difficult and most d vine art.

Perhaps we may best come at this whole matter by first raising the question as to what is the ultimate objective of the preacher, anyway. Most briefly, is it not, above all else, *the spiritualization of all life by making men God-conscious?* Is it not, in other words, the revelation of God to man and of man at his best to himself? If this be so, then how vast a significance is given to the preacher's vocation! He is God's coworker in the very

highest sense. For is not God's greatest objective just that—the exaltation, the glorification, the spiritualization of human life by the revelation of himself to mankind? The preacher's problem, then, is God's peculiar problem too.

And that it is a problem, and not an easy, inconsequential issue, is attested by the history of the whole human race, which history has two significant aspects. From the human point of view the problem has been a matter of man's seeking to know God. From the divine point of view God has ever been striving to make himself known to man. Scan briefly the story of the outworking of the two phases of this one idea.

Looked at from the human side, the spiritual and intellectual history of mankind may legitimately be interpreted as the story of humanity's attempt to grasp the infinite. From the earliest dawn of time, when man began to emerge from the low estate of brutedom, he gradually became aware of some invisible, intangible, yet ever-present Force, or Power, or Person in the world. Dimly, uncertainly, ever urged on by some deeply implanted instinct, he sought to comprehend its nature. The distinguishing characteristic which marked him off from the beast was a certain something within him which produced a divine discontent with the mere satisfaction of the flesh and perennially stirred him to seek to understand this power outside himself. He was forever lured to lift his eyes unto the hills, to consider the

heavens. A restless longing constantly welled up within him to know what lay beyond the stars, to discover who was behind the source of life, to learn the name of Him whose mighty movements were evidenced on every hand.

Now and again some person would appear who seemed to be peculiarly equipped to discern some aspect of the divine; and this valued bit of truth, once apprehended, demanded expression. Thus preachers were brought into being, men gripped by God who could do no other than attempt to articulate the best they knew about the Infinite that he might come to be better known by all mankind. Thus Amos discerned the truth that the Power behind the universe was righteous and just, and this emancipating idea he felt compelled to proclaim wherever he went. Thus Hosea, tutored by domestic tragedy and taught large lessons by his own inherent loyalty, came into the beautiful belief that God was motivated by love, which flaming fact he had to make known to all who would hear. Thus likewise Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the other mighty prophets who have lifted the world to a higher conception of God.

But never was this great Being, this infinite Person, really revealed until, at length, in the fullness of time, when mankind had sufficiently developed to be able, at least in a measure, to comprehend his true nature, God himself made the ultimate gesture of self-revelation. He him-

self uttered the word which all men sought. And how did he do it? He did it simply by showing to mankind a man, and he said, in substance: "You have striven to know me. You have searched for centuries to find me. Here I am wrapped up in this flesh, incarnate in this personality. Behold the Word!" "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This was God's sovereign sermon.

Jesus, then, stands in the same relation to the invisible Spirit of God that a word does to an idea —which statement deserves an illustration.

A man has an idea. He holds it definitely in the center of his mind. Clear and concise it is to him. But to all others his idea is vague, invisible, and intangible. To be sure, it has been contended that there are those who are skilled in mental telepathy, persons who, by some strange power, are able to divine the thought another holds without the latter's saying a word. This theory has largely been discredited, but suppose there were such persons. They would need no medium of expression to grasp the idea another might have. But such persons, if they exist at all, are at any rate few and far between. The great majority of mankind are utterly unable to grasp another's thought so long as that other refrains from articulating it. They may gather some faint impression of what he is thinking by noting his actions, but the idea itself remains uncertain, indefinite, until a word expressing that idea is uttered.

Now, here is this vast, ever-present idea of God, vague, invisible, intangible. The prophetic voices which have sought to reveal various aspects of his nature may be called experts, as it were, in spiritual telepathy; but humanity generally could never thus divine the nature of God. They must of necessity wait until the word expressing the idea is uttered. This word was uttered in Jesus, for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Since a word is the expression of an idea, of course if a man is not sufficiently developed to comprehend a certain idea any word expressing that idea is meaningless to him. By the same token, if the human race were not sufficiently developed to comprehend the true character of the invisible Spirit of God, Christ would have come to this earth in vain. Here, then, we have the answer to the question which has been asked with disconcerting directness by the opponents of Christianity since the time of Celsus—the question, that is, as to why it was that Christ did not come to earth sooner, since God was supposed to be so anxious at all times to make himself known to mankind. Why was the incarnation postponed for so long a time? The answer obviously is simply this: Because mankind was not sufficiently developed to comprehend the true character of God.

Even as the parent must take the child and, by years of patient training and by a thousand and

one devices, develop its mind gradually that it may at length be able to comprehend, for example, the meaning of higher mathematics or metaphysics, so God had to develop the human race through long centuries of growth up to the point where some, at least, could comprehend his true nature.

Inasmuch as God is unchangeable, and the love exhibited by him in Bethlehem was in him in days of old, one cannot but believe that he embraced the very earliest moment in point of time to manifest himself to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ. Even as it was, behold how few there were who understood the word! As it says in the Scriptures: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." The world knew him not, comprehended him not, and yet this was the very best way in which God could make himself plain. Best, that is, because it was concrete. The human mind can understand anything which is concrete better than that which is abstract. Long before a child can get the idea of roundness, he can understand the difference between an apple and a box, between a ball and a book. He can understand "round" long before he can understand "roundness." In this invisible idea of God we have "Godness"; but if we want to know God, we must sit at the feet of Jesus. That is not "Godness." That is the Word made flesh.

Nothing can be plainer than actual demon-

stration. The history of modern science is nothing but the coming over of the processes of the mind to this actual demonstrative method. In mediæval days men formulated their scientific theories in their studies and laboratories and then went out into the world to prove them. If the facts did not harmonize with the theories, then so much the worse for the facts. The modern scientist, however, forms no theories in the house. The botanist goes into the fields and studies the flowers, the plants, roots, stems, everything. He gets the actual things before him and then, studying them, he deduces his theories from the facts. Ancient medicine used to form a theory about disease and then doctor the theory. Modern medicine studies the man, finds out the facts, and then is very careful of making any theory which is not a simple deduction from these facts. And the wiser the doctor grows, the more he believes in his facts and the less he holds to his theories.

Now, Jesus Christ is simply an actual, practical demonstration of God. If one wants to see God, he must look at Jesus. If he would discover how the Almighty acts, he must watch Christ. If he would hear the Infinite, he must listen to the Word. Most men are forever clinging to the antiquated, obsolete, mediæval method of understanding God. They form their theories about God, ignoring, for the most part, the one great fact of Jesus Christ. Indeed, a good deal of our modern as well as our ancient exegesis has been

just that: exit Jesus. Then when they are confronted, as they inevitably are, with the stubborn reality of the Word made flesh, they try to make him fit into their theories. And if Christ does not happen to fit, so much the worse for Christ. Hence they are preaching everything but the Word.

One of the major reasons, then, why it is so superlatively important to "preach Christ" is simply that it is the one best way to reveal to man the true character of God, to make humanity truly God-conscious. Preaching Christ means confronting persons with the clearest and most concrete demonstration of the Infinite. For so far as is known, no person has ever been able to disclose any idea of God which in any way measures up to the concept Jesus has expressed. The kind of God Christ reveals so far surpasses any other conception that anyone else has ever been able to conceive of that it seems to be impossible to think beyond the idea of a Christlike God. Of course, if somebody comes along with a better idea of the Infinite than that which Jesus revealed, then it will be obligatory to "preach that person," and no longer necessary to "preach Christ." But until that somebody appears—and to date there seems to be not even a prophecy of his coming—it will continue to be imperative to "preach Christ."

It says in the Scripture that "there is no other name given among men whereby we must be

saved" but the name of Jesus Christ. That does not mean that there is some mysterious magic, some peculiar legerdemain, about naming his name. Name stands for personality, and the idea is that there is no other way by which a man is to be saved or made saving but by coming under the influence of the personality of God, which is most perfectly bodied forth in the person of Jesus Christ. No mere course of instruction, no certain amount of information, can make a bad man good or purge a person of his sins. There is no system of truth which can be taught, no set of books which can be read, no catechism which can change the shade of a sinful soul by so much as a shadow. But bring that life into actual, living touch with the best of lives, and directly there comes upon it the strange spell of the redemptive personality of the God-man, the Word made flesh. This, above all else, is what is meant by "preaching the Word."

How great difficulty confronts the preacher, however, when he attempts to preach the Word! So few seem to understand. So few hearken or heed. But that is the very problem which God himself has been confronted with ever since he first uttered the Word. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not . . . He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his

own received him not." In other words, God uttered himself as completely and as effectively as possible, and at the very earliest moment in point of time, too, yet only a few were able to comprehend the true meaning of the idea he sought to express. Why so?

The reason is that it takes two persons to tell a truth, not simply one. The easiest part in expressing a truth is saying one's say. The most difficult part is getting one's say understood. To illustrate one need but mention that which has been called "the chemistry of thought." For example, suppose a person has a *blue* idea which he is anxious to convey to a group of persons who, because of different background, heritage, education, health, or what not, have minds full of what might be called *yellow* ideas. Now, this person utters his blue idea with care, conciseness and completeness. What do the persons addressed actually hear? A blue idea? No. A yellow idea? No. What they hear is a *green* idea. That is, whenever a person speaks, the thing the auditor really hears is not simply what is said, but the net result of what is said after it has been mixed with what is already in the latter's mind.

Now, when God uttered his word he had, let us say, a blue idea to express. But the mind of the world was full of yellow ideas. Hence what was heard was a green idea. And actually it has taken over nineteen hundred years to bring the green over to an approximation, even, of the

beautiful blueness of this pure idea of God which he sought to disclose.

When it is said that the mind of the world was full of yellow ideas what is meant is that the world had a most erroneous conception of God. One aspect of that misconception was that God must be some sort of King, some mighty Ruler, some vast Potentate high and lifted up. The reason for this conception was simply that the people had no other idea of greatness than the king-idea. The great man on earth was, obviously, the one who could rule, boss, order others about. Since, therefore, God must be the greatest of all the great, he must certainly be the King of all the kings and the Lord of all the lords. No one ever thought it necessary to prove this, of course, because no one could comprehend any other way of ruling but the king-way.

The idea of the character of God that Jesus sought to reveal was as different from this ancient conception which the world held as blue is from yellow. No wonder he was so tragically misunderstood! They watched for a prince, and lo, a humble babe was born in a barn! They expected a king, and a carpenter came! No gaudy trappings, no symbols of temporal power, no palace nor throne, no scepter nor crown of gold! None of these things did the Son of God have nor desire; only love and life which he yearned to share with every last lost human being. And what incomprehensible words were his! He said: "I come

not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "He that would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all." And he urged all men to push his words to their ultimate application, even to the Infinite. In other words, God, who is greatest of all, cannot be a King, cannot be some exalted Potentate, magnified Kaiser or sublimated Czar, cannot be the All-Terrible, high in the heavens, seated in awful state upon a great white throne. God is like Jesus, the Word made flesh; hence he is the universal, infinite Servant. He it is who makes the stars to hold their orbits, who keeps this shining globe whirling on its axis. He it is who makes the snow to fall, and in due season the grass to upspring and the leaves to put forth. He it is who heals the sick, feeds the hungry, cheers the broken-hearted, and constantly sustains the innumerable creatures of his hand. "Meek and lowly of heart," tender, approachable, loving, he dwells not in yonder heavenly magnificence, but goes about among the sons of men, serving, serving, serving. "Going about and doing good," eternally washing, as it were, the feet of the disciples, and always revealing the prodigality of his omnipotent love by dying that his children might live. That's God! The Word made flesh says so.

It is a sort of spiritual axiom that one's notion of God more subtly reacts to shape his character than any other idea which he might possess. As a man's God is, so is he. The kind of Deity a

person worships determines the kind of person he tends to become. Herein lies the high significance of preaching Christ—that the true God might be revealed.

So long as the world persists in believing the horrid lie that God is a mighty Monarch ruling with sovereign power, just so long will all men strive to be little monarchs in their own petty realms. If God be a King in his high heaven, then man will strive to play the emperor in his small sphere; he will aspire to boss, control, and rule. But once the revelation of God as articulated in the Word made flesh is caught, behold what a wondrous transformation takes place! In the carpenter Christ one sees God the great Worker; in the healing Nazarene, the holy Helper of humanity; in the gentle Galilæan, the tender, tireless Servant of all men! And lo, the cheap and tawdry desire for place and power dies out! A new passion is born, a satisfying, joy-giving passion truly to serve one's fellow men, a passion so strong and clean that it may drive one to a cross—and immortality!

When seized with such a holy zeal a man can be a preacher of the Word, and he can preach with power. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

IX

PREACHING AND LIFE

By Harry Levi

The Old Testament, whatever else it may be, is primarily a book of religion. From beginning to end it tells us of the religious life of the Jewish people. It presents us with a succession of leaders who never tire telling their people about God and exhorting them to do God's will. But few of these leaders were preachers as we now understand the term. Moses would decline his commission because he cannot speak and Aaron is appointed as his spokesman. Jeremiah is equally timid. "I cannot speak," he says, "I am but a child." The prophets were simply messengers of God, receiving his bidding and repeating it to their people. But they could never have been charged with delivering sermons.

Preaching, as such, may be said to have begun in Jewish life after the Exile, when Ezra addressed his people and had his assistants interpret his message. And "they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

By the beginning of the Christian era preaching had become a regular feature of the service of both synagogue and church, and it has remained such to this day. All through history great divines,

eloquent ministers have dignified and glorified it. But never before did it know the prominence that attaches to it now. Save in the Catholic Church, practically in every place of worship it has become the most conspicuous part of the service. In many churches, indeed, the rest of the service has become simply a background for the address. In the briefest church service the sermon consumes the major portion of the time. Many church members never appear at the service until the sermon is about to be delivered. And the value of a minister to his church is often gauged not by his spirituality, his genuineness, his prayerfulness, but by his pulpit eloquence.

Now, there is, of course, not only room but need in our religious services for that direct personal word that shall comfort and inspire. As eloquence has been the servant of every great cause, it can also generously and efficiently serve the cause of religion. But there is great danger to the church in magnifying the significance of the sermon at the expense of the rest of the service. Preaching can never take the place of prayer and song. No one-sided or one-man religious service can succeed. An efficient religious service must be democratic, shared in by those who sit in the pews. They must be given an opportunity, and a liberal opportunity at that, to voice their own longings, and to commune with the God they worship. The preacher should lead and suggest, but he must not monopolize the service.

Yet we have to face the fact that for many people "sermon" and "service" are interchangeable terms. They are not attracted by a church service as such. If the preacher is uninteresting, they will not even attend. This is especially true of young people. They are not necessarily irreligious. There are those who care little for set forms of prayer and ritual observance who yet hunger for the religious word that shall inspire them. And they wander from church to church, seeking the messenger of God who will show them the way. The millions of unchurched who regularly listen over the radio to the sermons of ministers whose churches they do not attend not only prove to us that the unchurched are by no means spiritually lost, that the cause of religion is by no means in a parlous way, but witness as well to the increasingly important place that preaching has come to occupy in our present-day religious life.

Which truth offers the ministry a blessed opportunity, but involves as well a great responsibility. There are those in every church, usually the older men and women, to whom the traditional ritual makes real appeal. There are those with vision enough to see that a religious group writes its very soul into its prayers, prayers which by their traditional association, by the fact that they have been wrought and distilled of ages of experience, by the memory of the millions who through the years have repeated them and found them

blessedly helpful, still thrill and emotionally stir, as the petition of the moment, however beautifully phrased, cannot hope to do. These men and women I believe are in the minority. And their number is decreasing. The majority wait upon the direct word of the preacher. For better or worse he represents religion to them, represents the church to them. They take their religious cue from him. Some come to church as a matter of conventionality, some young people because their parents would have them come, some it may be because they are superstitious, some because of a mystic appeal they cannot understand or explain. But others come because they are seeking for the truth, eager to be religious, eager to find the will of God and follow it. And they come praying that they may find the truth by way of the lips of the minister. A responsibility that will crush all save stout hearts and robust souls. I can understand why Moses and Jeremiah trembled in the face of their appointment. And I can understand why Solomon in his dream, sensing the responsibility that awaited him, should have prayed, "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people." Long ago, speaking in the name of God, Moses said to his people, "Behold I place before you to-day life and death, choose thou life." He would make the decision theirs. But now masses of people timidly and reverently come to the

minister as to the man of God, and falling on their knees tearfully confess that though they have choice between life and death, they know not how to choose. And so they piteously beseech him, "Help us find the way of life."

Because people thus hang on the lips of the minister, because his word may make or unmake their faith, their whole religious destiny, he is blessed indeed who is eloquent. But eloquence is no synonym of elocution, of oratorical ability or vocal capacity. Elijah found God in the still small voice when he missed him in lightning and thunder. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Thomas of Spoletto describes the preaching of Francis of Assisi: "He had not the manners of a preacher; his ways were, rather, those of conversation. His apparel was poor, his person, in no respect imposing. His face was not at all handsome. Yet God gave such great efficacy to his words that he brought back to peace and harmony many nobles whose savage fury had not stopped short of the spilling of blood." Michelangelo knew little Hebrew. Hence, misreading the passage in Exodus, he pictured Moses with horns coming down from Mount Sinai. In truth, the passage should read, "And Moses came down from the mount, and his face shone." He had been speak-

ing with God. No wonder he knew how to move his people, even though he was "slow of speech and tongue."

For eloquence is, of course, a matter not of externals but internals; the natural, the inevitable articulation of deep-rooted conviction. We can preach only when, only what, we believe, and once we ardently believe, in ourselves, in our cause, we cannot help preaching. Hence Isaiah can speak of the seraph who touched his lips with a glowing stone. No wonder the prophets felt compelled to speak whether they willed it or no. No wonder Tolstoy, Lovejoy, and the whole host of historic heroes could dare to speak their hearts even when death threatened.

Eloquence is only passionate belief made audible. It must find expression and it will, whether from a soap-box, a rostrum or a pulpit. And it will sway people, if not by its logic then by its emotion. "Out of the heart are the issues of life."

"Conduct is three fourths of life," said Matthew Arnold. Emotion may be three fourths of life and religion. But, of course, in both life and religion emotion alone is not sufficient. It must be directed and regulated by reason. Passion is vital to preaching, but unchecked, it may do more harm than good. Reasoned enthusiasm may inspire and bless. Unthinking emotion may lead only to fanaticism, bigotry, intolerance, to irreparable injury. Many a bloody trail in history found its source in passionate belief. It is not

enough to feel, we must at least try to justify our feeling. It is not enough to believe. We must, if we can, find warrant for that belief. We must preach out of our convictions, but for these convictions we must try to find rational support. Of course there is much we do not and never shall know. Hence the place of faith in life. But faith must never be blind credulity. At best it must be inference based on experience, on our experience or that of the race. We trust a friend because we have tested him and have not found him wanting. We walk humbly with God, not because we know what to-morrow may bring forth, but because we know what God has done in the long yesterday. "What I have seen of God," said Emerson, "leads me to trust him for what I have not seen." We believe much we cannot prove, save as it is consistent with and seems to issue inevitably from what has already been. But so far as lies within our power we must know this story. God has given us minds to use. Faith is divine, so is fact, so is reason. God is no more in mystery than in history. "He who can prove the reality of God by the stars and declines to do so," said an old moralist, "will have to account for his refusal." Maybe he who said, "An ignorant man cannot be pious," went too far. There are illiterate people who are deeply spiritual. But surely willful illiteracy, deliberate ignorance, conscious refusal to listen to reason—surely this cannot be religion. Hence in the book of Job

God can say to Eliphaz, "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." And Job was the heretic of his day. But Job dared to test his faith in God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." And his friends were the conventional stand-patters, who feared to go counter to current belief, who believed but who dared not think. "The Lord is a God of knowledge," we are told in Samuel. "Ye are my witnesses," says Isaiah, speaking in the name of God, "that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he." Even the pew must think as well as believe. But assuredly so must the pulpit. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge," urges Malachi, "and they should seek the law at his mouth." William Lyon Phelps tells of attending services in a Protestant church in Paris. The minister in his address contrasted his position with that of the Catholic Church. "The Catholics," he said, "provide beautiful music, a dignified ritual which is very impressive; but we appeal not to the eye and the ear, but to the mind and the heart." The real church must appeal to all four. Pity the man who can feel, but cannot think. Pity the man who can reason, but remains unfeeling. Pity the church that warms the heart, but leaves reason unsatisfied. Pity the church that appeals to the reason, but leaves the heart cold.

The suggestion, of course, holds for men in every

profession. But I am speaking especially of men in the ministry. We need to employ both emotion and reason and to employ them not only out of the pulpit, but in it. Now, if there is one profession more than another that covers the whole of life, it is, I think, the ministry. It is not merely because men in the ministry cannot afford to preach one thing and practice another; it is that at every step of the way they find it difficult to separate themselves from their profession. The attitude of the laity toward the ministry may be responsible. At any rate men of the cloth live, move, and have their being in the field of religion, and "find sermons in stones" even when they do not find "good in everything." As a matter of fact, there are preachers who find good in nothing and walk wearily and pessimistically through life. "And God saw everything that he had made . . . was good," we are told in Genesis. But some ministers cannot see with God's eyes. At any rate, if we are to find sermons in stones, let us be sure that these sermons have not only religious content, but a religious message. Indeed, this is the only warrant for our preaching. We have no right to preach unless we feel that we have definite religious counsel to offer. "Religion is everything or it is nothing." Religion must be coextensive with life. And therefore in the pulpit we have warrant for speaking of any theme we propose to interpret in religious terms—politics, industry, commerce, international relations, art,

literature, the drama, all—providing, and providing only, as we view them as expressions of religious life. When we want medical advice we turn to a physician. When we are puzzled by a question of law we have recourse to a lawyer. If it is a case of nerves, we seek out a neurologist. When we need religious advice we turn to the minister. His is primarily the field of religion. Here he has a right to stand as authority. Here he can speak as an expert. "Men should seek the law at his mouth," but it must be the religious law. If he knows no such law, he should forever hold his peace.

So the minister must first of all preach religion. But what is religion, and how can we preach it if we cannot identify it? There are scores of definitions of religion. And these definitions differ not merely in phraseology, but in content and outlook. What is religion? A matter of form and ceremony? Partially. Every religion must resort to the use of forms and ceremonies. They are props which support our faith. They are observances which help us visualize our religious beliefs and ideals, which make that which is abstract concrete, and which help us remember the great occasions in our religious history which we should otherwise forget. They are symbols which develop our understanding and our loyalty. That is why every nation uses them and every religion as well. But they are justified only as a means to an end. They can help religion, but

can never take its place. Indeed, if too much stress is laid on them, they can hurt the cause of faith. Ecclesiasticism is not religion.

And morals are, of course, an essential part of religion. Religion must express itself in moral and ethical terms. To be religious we must have clean hands and pure hearts and must self-sacrificingly serve our fellows. So that obviously we are discussing religion when we demand of men that they make the most of themselves, that they develop the divine in them, and that they do their full duty by those among whom they live. No matter how much, or long, or loud we pray, how regularly we attend services, how meticulously we mark the observances of the church, we know little of real religion unless we translate all this into an influence that shall enrich life for us and others.

Yet religion is not merely the Golden Rule. It is not merely doing justice and loving mercy; it is "walking humbly with God." Religion is not merely doing good, it is doing good in the name and under the influence of God. I am not criticizing atheists. There are honest atheists. There are good people who cannot find God. But I do believe that we cannot give our best to life unless our program is wrought of a consciousness of our relation to God. Social service, charity, philanthropy cannot take the place of religion. We need belief in God to lift our service above the level of whim and caprice, of emotion and emer-

gency, to the height where it becomes imperative, above the level where we serve because for the moment we are touched to the height where service becomes divinely obligatory. People who are good without a consciousness of God will be better with it. Religion is observance. Religion is service. But above and beyond all it is God. Zangwill tells of an aged man who during the height of the war asked to see the prime minister of England. "What would you see him about?" he was asked. "I would confer with him about God." "But the prime minister is too busy a man to discuss such a subject." And Zangwill describes the horror of the visitor when he was told that one of the most significant figures of his day, facing with his people the most threatening dangers, was too busy to discuss the only theme worth discussing. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

We blunder grievously if we believe for a moment, whatever may be true of exceptional men and women, that people are too busy to think about God, or too much concerned with other interests. I do not remember the time when they were so deeply concerned with the fundamentals of religion. War, we usually say, robs men of their faith. Strangely enough, the great World War made for spiritualism, a mysticism from which we have not yet emerged. Think of the number of books on religious questions that have issued from the press during the last few years.

There are preachers who feel they can fill their pews only when they discuss questions of the day, the latest book or the latest play, when they introduce the sensational into their addresses. If I may speak from my own experience, I should venture to say that people are never as interested in the discussion of secular themes as they are in the consideration of the deep problems of faith and life and destiny, which they would solve for their own happiness. They want to know about God, and prayer, and immortality. That is why in such vast numbers they search for the pulpit that shall satisfy their spiritual needs. That is why so many new religions have been born in recent years. That is why every apostle of a new type of mysticism finds followers. People are not too busy to be interested in religion. On all sides there is a new hunger for faith. Woe betide the minister who fails to sense the need and misses the opportunity.

We need to preach anew the message of religion. And we need to be reminded anew of the duty. I know of no minister who would deliberately preach atheism. But the number of ministers is legion who do not hesitate to preach a godless philosophy not far removed from atheism, a philosophy which, where the thinking are concerned, and the unthinking too, cannot help feed the fires of unbelief. Religion stands for love, for neighborliness, for brotherliness, for co-operation, for service, for forgiveness, while the pulpit so

often preaches war and hate and prejudice and intolerance, denying all the essential ideals of religion. Men hunger for bread and we give them stones. We curse the very cause we would bless. Noting the glaring inconsistency, George Ade said recently: "It is amazing that we have in this country, and particularly in this region, so many people who have dark minds, and are narrow between the eyes, and who can find no virtue in any person who does not travel with their own dingy little herd. You seldom find any one of these bigots who is any kind of an asset to his community. He is a pretty feeble proposition, but what strength he has he takes out in hating all those who do not believe as he does. It is little wonder that the churches which are congested with these dreadful fanatics are disintegrating, losing their membership and losing their influence."[1] In *Harper's Magazine* for September, James Harvey Robinson discusses the theme "Religion Faces a New World." "To claim," he argues, "that the disappearance of witchcraft and slavery and the introduction of religious toleration were the effects of Christian teachings seems not to stand inspection. The leaders of the various churches have most rarely raised their voices against what seem to us now ancient and happily extinct atrocities. They were not the ones who did away with them. On the contrary, they very generally supported religious intolerance, accepted slavery, blessed war,

[1] Reprinted by permission.

and cursed those who suspected the gloomy deceptions of witchcraft."[1] From which view Whittier in his poem, "Clerical Oppressors," did not dissent. If all this be true, it is a terrible indictment not so much of the church as of the pulpit. For whatever its influence, the pew is largely the reflection of the pulpit. Like shepherd, like flock. If men and women know distorted spiritual vision, the ministry is not without responsibility.

We need to preach religion. Even more than denominationalism. I would not belittle our differences. We cannot see or think or speak alike. No one religion can satisfy all men. We have no religion until we interpret it in terms of our own soul life. If we are to be true to ourselves, if religion is to be for us not a mere convention, but a way of life, something real, it is inevitable that we must here and there part company with others. Men need to be loyal to their own convictions and to preach these convictions. But the fact that we differ with others does not necessarily make them inferior to us. They may be in the right and we in the wrong. Both of us may be in the right. Truth has more than one aspect. Nor do our differences offer the slightest warrant for our dislikes and prejudices. Nor dare they blind us to the many things we have in common. As a matter of fact, for every difference we know, we know scores of resemblances. It is the unusual that attracts attention. We note an

[1] Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine*.

eclipse of the sun, though its daily rising leaves us unmoved. We need not sacrifice depth of conviction for breadth of view. But it is not too much to expect ministers to preach the belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, which they profess, and for which they are supposed to stand.

I have spoken at length of the things we should preach. In the last analysis we can preach only ourselves. We would preach religion, but we cannot preach it unless we have it. And religion is no proxy matter. We have no religion just because we belong to a church or because we occupy a pulpit. "Religion is what a man does with his solitariness," says Professor Whitehead in his book, *Religion in the Making*. Religion is a social matter in the sense that it must make us serve. But at bottom it is an individual matter. We have no religion unless we have a religion of our own—which means that we must interpret even the program of our own church, in terms that shall satisfy not merely our emotions but our intellects. And we dare preach only that which is our very own. In a real sense, then, every sermon must be autobiographic. But in a real sense that is true of every great poem, every great story, every great drama. Emerson once said he had a friend who never attempted to paint a tree until in large measure he had become a tree. Shakespeare's plays are great because Shakespeare wrote himself into them so com-

pletely. That is why, though we knew so little of Shakespeare's life, Brandes could reconstruct that life from the man's work. Whatever church we belong to, let us be, and let us preach, ourselves.

And that means, of course, sharing with our people our own problems. Doctor Harry Emerson Fosdick argues that the secret of successful preaching lies in discussing from the pulpit the problems of the pew. But unless these problems are also his own the minister has nothing to offer the pew save words. And mere words heal few wounds. Indeed, they cannot heal at all unless they come from the heart as from the lips, and are wrought of personal experience. Hence the best social servants are those who have been ground between the upper and the nether millstone. Hence the prophet can speak of the "suffering servant of God," as though to suggest that we cannot serve unless we suffer. We want to help our people in their difficulties. Hence we must understand these difficulties, must if possible share them. And because ministers are still human beings, and because human nature is largely the same everywhere, and because God is not partial the pulpit can, if it will, feel not only for the pew, but with it, and if it have a fine high sense of consecration, can ease its hurt and bind up its wounds.

And one further word. Persuasive preaching is the product not only of life, but of good life. It is a truism, of course, that we can preach well only that which we practice. Often, indeed, the

practice is the best preaching we can offer. Good living is the finest eloquence. Stanley called himself the greatest atheist in London. Yet he could say, "Livingstone converted me and he did not know he was doing it." We would preach God. Let us live him. We would preach religion. Let us live it. And "the words of our mouths," wrought "of the meditations of our hearts," will be acceptable not only to God, but to men, and will bless them.

X

THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF PREACHING

By Russell Henry Stafford, D.D.

What do we mean by the spiritual aspect of preaching? The word "spiritual" is perhaps the most indefinite of those stock terms of religious diction which we use without thinking, as though their intention were a matter of common understanding. Common understanding is hardly to be depended upon so implicitly, however, and the result of such unwarranted trustfulness is a lamentable vagueness in much religious discussion. A wise woman once told me that she had counseled her nephew, who was entering the ministry, to preach for the first three months without once using the word "spiritual," in order that, when he did come to use it, his own mind might be entirely clear, from having sought out its synonyms through that period, as to just what he purposed to convey by it.

This much, however, is manifest: that by the spiritual aspect of preaching we mean that something more, beyond the other aspects of pulpit utterance, which makes such utterance live. We mean something more than the art of the sermon. Every sermon ought to be a work of art. It ought to have line and color. That it should be

formless and dull is unnecessary, and unworthy alike of its subject matter and of the congregation to which it is presented. Any message worth delivering is worth preparing with such care that its elements shall be articulated in an organism of thought and feeling instinct with the breath of beauty. And every congregation, made up as all congregations are of children of God who in his sight are of infinite worth, deserves that the preacher who addresses it should fashion the vehicle of his thought with strenuous care, as a tribute of respect to his hearers. Moreover, every sermon should be delivered, after this painstaking preparation of its substance, in a manner observant of the canons of effective public speaking, so that it may be as engaging as possible. To be sure, we have doubtless all heard great sermons preached by awkward men in a rasping tone; but the sermons were hardly greater for the awkwardness and rasping. Yet, when rhetoric and elocution have received their due, a sermon will be dreary and impotent, so far as specifically religious results are concerned, unless it have that something more which we call the spiritual aspect.

Again, this aspect means something more than an ethical emphasis. What precisely the relation of ethics and religion may be is a matter of vigorous dispute; but that a relation exists, so close that religion without ethics is void, there are probably none to deny. It is not too much to say, I think, that every sermon ought in some way

to drive home a challenge to the consciences of its auditors. Yet the ethical note, without something more than mere academic elucidation of the moral code, however correct, will not lift a sermon above the level of inertia. And that something more is the spiritual aspect we are trying to define.

Finally, that aspect means something more than the intellectual content of preaching. Every true sermon must be constructed on a framework of hard thinking and respectable logic. Reason will not carry us the whole way to a religious position; but, on the other hand, no religious position merits consideration which contravenes reason within its own sphere, or which fails to make a rational appeal, on the ground of overwhelming probability, in behalf of such of its principles as lie beyond reason's reach. An opinion has won wide currency of late to the effect that the day of theological preaching is over. On the contrary, I hope and believe that a new day of better theological preaching is just dawning. Every preacher should be a theologian, for the reason that a theology in which he deeply believes, however faulty it may seem to others, is the only mold which will give shape, before the eyes of his people, to the molten ore of his religious convictions. Yet a sermon which is intellectual, and nothing more, is like a bomb which fails to explode: it is a "dud." Again, the something more that it needs is the spiritual aspect of preaching.

And still it is by no means evident what that

something more may be. Let us, then, investigate the word "spiritual" itself. The New Testament term which in the English translations is rendered "spiritual" comes to bear, to be sure, in some of the epistles, a sense fairly analogous with the accepted current connotation of the English word. Nevertheless, this Greek adjective does not suggest much concerning the nature of the spiritual factor in normal experience, for it originates, in New Testament usage, with reference to the phenomena of Pentecost. These phenomena were not normal. Not only have similar upheavals been exceptional in the subsequent history of the church—though we doubt not but that the Holy Spirit is ever operative among faithful Christians—but also, when disturbances and excitements in a general way parallel have occurred, it has been in the main among persons of unstable nervous organization, like the earnest but untutored men and women of the lower orders who were in the majority among the primitive adherents of the gospel at Jerusalem. And psychologists have shown, with sufficient cogency to convince most men of open mind, that such phenomena are psychopathic. However salutary their effects may be in some isolated instances, they are in origin visceral rather than divine. To desire them, and seek to produce them, is to introduce into the practice of the gospel elements of hysteria, ineptly sublimated eroticism, and the like, utterly unworthy of the poise and sanity of our Lord and Saviour.

By way of substitution for this psychopathic sense of the word "spiritual" insofar as the reaction from it has been reluctant, many have taken to using the word "spiritual" as though it pointed to emotionalism and unctuousness. This is a debasement of the idea which has wrought havoc to the repute of religion among sensible people given to a decent reserve. On our guard against this unpleasant misconception, some of us are perhaps unduly distrustful of any clergyman whom the old ladies in his parish describe as spiritually-minded. We are afraid they mean simply that he is sentimental, or, still worse, sanctimonious. To be sentimental is not a sign of deep feeling, but of shallow thinking. To be sanctimonious is not a sign of good religion, but of bad manners. In the same way, we suspect that spiritual preaching means simply canting talk in a ranting voice to many Christians who, if they ever had a critical sense, check it at the door when they come to church. Much vulgarity, much effeminacy, much vacuity masquerades in the pulpit under the guise of spirituality.

Surely, it is neither the one nor the other of these two depressing vagaries—religious neurasthenia, or unctuous pietism—which any of us mean by that something more which raises a homiletic essay above rhetoric and elocution, above ethics and theology, and makes it a true sermon. But there is another New Testament term, especially characteristic of the Johannine writings, which

seems to be used in much the same way in which thoughtful Christians to-day use the word "spiritual." That is the adjective which in the Authorized Version is rendered "everlasting," and in the Revised Version "eternal." In its literal sense this word means not "everlasting," but "age-long" —referring not to infinite but to definite duration. But in its theological sense it is evidently employed with reference to that which exists independently of time and space—partaking of the quality of the being of God, to whom there is no past or future, but an everlasting Now, and to whom all things, subsisting by his will, are present simultaneously in some inscrutable way transcending distance. This is, I take it, what we mean, or ought to mean, by the word "spiritual": pertaining to the divine nature, and to that ultimate supernal reality which is the world in its perfection as God perfectly knows it.

The spiritual aspect of preaching, then, is that accent of thought and voice, that buoyancy of outlook and uplift, which are derived from the preacher's awareness of the eternal order. Our message is the good news of the Kingdom. That good news is not primarily that the Kingdom is to be realized in time, through an earthly order harmonious with the character and purposes of God. Rather, this hope is derived from the antecedent consciousness that God now is; that we are now as truly his children as ever we shall be; and that, though hidden from the eyes of our

flesh, heaven is to-day our true home, so that heaven's laws are to-day the only valid laws of our being. We are here at the heart of religion. There can be no religion, though there may be a religious intention and longing, where God's Absolute is not discerned looming sublimely beyond the relativities of our empirical perceptions.

He whose preaching carries the inspiring urgency of this celestial vision, as an overtone to all the phrases of his utterance, to the souls of his congregation has found the spiritual aspect we are seeking. Against this background he is able also to be a witness for the inviting beauty and joy of the spiritual life in the world we now know; that is, of such a life here as dares to defy utilitarian conventions in order to conform to the code of heaven, the first and last term of which is love—love for God, in whom we live and move and have our being eternally; love for our fellows, who are our brethren in the eternal household, and who must be won to a saving knowledge of this divine fraternity.

He who witnesses effectively to the good news of the eternal Kingdom, and to the supremacy of celestial law upon the earth, will come into touch with the very hearts of his people; for he will penetrate beneath their superficial variations, by the light of his brotherly solicitude for the needs of their souls, to the deeper region where all souls are at one. He will not frame his sermons with

such considerations in mind as that this man has money which the church needs, or that that woman is cantankerous and must at all hazards be placated or kept in good humor. He will not be thinking at all in terms of rich or poor, mean or kindly, powerful or insignificant, as the world estimates human worth. He will be thinking of those to whom he ministers as God's children, all of equal value in his sight and his servant's, and all having problems to be solved, and wretchedness to be removed; and of himself as the vehicle of a divine truth powerful to emancipate them, and to give them "a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning." And that wise and pitiful sympathy on the preacher's part constitutes supremely the spiritual aspect of preaching, which will kindle his hearers as with a flaming coal from the altar on high.

There are certain simple rules for the preacher which will safeguard this spiritual aspect of his utterance. The first is to maintain an uncompromising sincerity; for the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth. By this I do not mean that a man should always say all he thinks. For to express our whole thought on minor matters of obscure bearing or controversial cast will often make a greater demand upon the intellectual capacities and offer a more distracting challenge to the prejudices of a congregation than it is wise or right to ask them to meet. Our blessed Lord has given the example of a considerate

reserve by refraining from untimely criticism of many popular notions among his countrymen which he can hardly be supposed to have accepted in the recesses of his own reflective mind. But I do mean that a man ought never to say anything he does not believe, because he supposes that his hearers expect him to say it. So soon as a man sullies his honesty by using any phrase or turn of speech simply in order, for instance, to produce a misleading impression of orthodoxy, he loses touch with that eternal order of which he is the exponent, and his preaching will be devitalized.

Second, the dominant tone of preaching must be affirmative. It is sometimes necessary, to be sure, to pronounce strong negatives, and explain them with fearless candor, in order to prepare the way for a positive message. But that the theme of a sermon should ever be an attack upon any view or institution, simply for the sake of attack, means that that sermon will be no sermon at all, but a harangue dragged down from the level of religion into what may broadly be described as the arena of politics. The message of the Spirit is the good news of the Kingdom of God, not the bad news that other kingdoms are of the devil.

Finally, the preacher must establish a harmony between his mind and the minds of his congregation by deliberately meeting them on their own level, as one of themselves. This implies that

moral condescension, as of the holy to the sinful, and all scolding are debarred. If the preacher have any insight at all, he will see the shadows upon his own character distinctly enough to feel that, whomever else his sermon may affect, he must deliver it primarily as a summons and spur to his own conscience and will. It may be that his people need scolding, if only there were some one at hand good enough to upbraid them without violence to his own modesty. But there has been only one Preacher good enough to do that; and he never scolded his friends, though he did at times exhibit his mastery of poignant invective at the expense of his enemies. The prophets scolded abundantly, and won great audiences thereby, as any picturesque public scold can still do. But He who was greater than the prophets said instead, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest;" and, to one of whose guilt there could be no doubt, "Neither do I condemn thee."

This voluntary identification of the preacher with his congregation means, further, that he must not be guilty of the effrontery of an artificial simplification of his message, in order to come within the putative limitations of their comprehension. To be sure, preaching can be too abstract, and can employ concepts and phraseology which few if any will understand, for the reason that most members of the congregation will discover at the outset that the sermon is uninteresting, and will therefore refrain from listening

to it. But to avoid that excess is simply a problem of rhetoric. In a meeting of college students which I attended not long ago, one young man spoke vehemently on the philosophical subject under discussion for some twenty minutes, using the most extraordinary technical jargon any of us had ever heard; then he concluded with an apology for what he whimsically described as having gone on a vocabularistic jag. Vocabularistic jags are not to be recommended in the pulpit. On the other hand, to suppose that we must always use words of one syllable, or that our people will not be interested in ideas, or capable of following them, as contrasted with platitudes and anecdotes, is to fail so grievously in respect for their intelligence as inevitably to destroy the fraternal bond which must unite preacher and congregation, if spiritual results are to be obtained. Most of us can give the best we have without sacrificing the spiritual aspect of our preaching; for, though we may perchance have to employ some unfamiliar terms in developing our thesis, the context and intonation will usually carry over their significance to our hearers quite sufficiently. But that aspect will inevitably go by the boards if we assume patronizingly that nothing beyond a trite little talk will get across the distance from pulpit to pew.

If we are to be spokesmen of the eternal order, and of life in harmony therewith upon the earth, it would seem that in order to qualify for our task we ought to dwell often and long alone

with God in the consciousness of eternal verity, giving devotional and mystical exercises first place in our daily schedule. Would that that were possible! But, alas, the modern preacher is also an administrator, and a participant in dozens of activities which, though doubtless of secondary moment, are nevertheless indispensable to his standing in the community and to the progress and influence of his parish. Most of us, I fear, do well, under this handicap, if we say our prayers once a day, and find time somehow to read one daily chapter of the Bible. If we went much beyond that, we should be slighting other interests more immediately pressing, it would seem, than our devotions. Now, perhaps I ought to inveigh against this circumscription of our spiritual opportunity, and call upon myself and you to cast it off at whatever cost. Instead, however, though under protest, I acquiesce; for someone must perform the routine duties of the active ministry, and it is not easy to see upon whom they could devolve in our default. But need devotion to these concrete tasks, at the expense of the prayer-life, mean that our preaching must have no spiritual aspect? Not if we are doing our best to prepare our sermons thoughtfully—and that is one of our routine duties—and approach the hour for presenting them publicly with a feeling of dependence upon divine aid to render our preparation fruitful, the more acute for our acknowledged and enforced poverty of soul. William

Ewart Gladstone once said of his speeches in the House of Commons, "I cannot help recording that this matter of speaking is really my strongest religious exercise." Mr. Osbert Burdett, in his recent scintillating and sardonic monograph on the great Victorian statesman, plays at length upon this statement, as attesting in his estimation the thinness and lack of spontaneity in the spiritual life of his subject. But I dare say that Mr. Burdett has never been a busy administrator and a professional public speaker at the same time. If he had, he would know that men with a thousand tasks to do have little leisure for religious exercises unrelated to their tasks; and probably he would have had the experience, which has doubtless come to all of us, that, in speaking under strong conviction after thorough routine preparation upon a topic which stirs one's soul, there comes sometimes a warming of the heart, an illumination of the eyes, an eloquence surprising to oneself as though the words of one's lips came from a source above one's own mind; a power of truth throbbing through our feeble lips so palpably as to compel the blessed awareness of the effective presence of God with us. Not only does such preaching as we believe in with all our hearts afford us an exercise in religion which of itself recreates our own spiritual experience, while it carries the accents of that experience with vital urgency to the hearts of our hearers; but also I make bold to claim that no utterance from the

pulpit deserves to be called a sermon unless the spiritual aspect of this preaching be attested by the fact that the sermon affords to the preacher as well as to his congregation a vivid and stimulating adventure of the soul.

XI

THE ADVENTURE OF PREACHING

By Lynn Harold Hough

Curiously enough, the most penetrating remark which anybody made during the progress of the Civil War, between the years 1860 and 1865, was made by Mrs. Jefferson Davis. I suppose those who have made a study of her life are not entirely surprised, because she was a woman of extraordinary mental capacity and a very extraordinary insight. And yet I fancy every reader of her letter—which I am about to report—who has come upon this letter suddenly, must have read it with a sense of shock. Mrs. Davis was analyzing after her very acute fashion the situation which produced the Civil War; and I am summarizing or paraphrasing rather than putting her words literally, although I am doing justice to her own expression. She said, in effect: "The Confederate States went out of the Union to protest against the principle of solidarity. They went out because they believed that the separate State had a right to live its own life regardless of any demand from the central authority." And then she said: "When the crisis of the war came on, my husband found himself confronted by a very singular and difficult situation. In order to organize the

military forces of the Confederacy successfully, it was necessary that the Confederacy become a closely knit and a highly articulated fabric; and we reached the situation in which it was absolutely necessary for us in the South to call in the very principle protesting against which we went out of the Union to win the war which would enable us to stay out." I regard that as the most penetrating and significant sentence coming from anyone between 1860 and 1865.

I venture to quote that to-night because it reminds one of the singular dilemma in which one sometimes finds himself. May I suggest the dilemma in which a minister is likely to find himself when it comes to pass that the attitude and qualities of his life as a preacher somehow fail to express the very genius of that life to which he is calling people as a part of his ministerial profession? I will not say that sometimes he calls into practice the very principles against which he is protesting as a minister, though there are those who have been profane enough to suggest that certain ministerial successes have been achieved in that fashion. But I will say that to make the preaching ministry the expression of the very genius of life itself, and the life to which the minister calls men, represents, it seems to me, not only a matter of very great difficulty, but a matter with regard to which we have thought all too little. I suppose it would be a more daring man than I am who would try to express in an epigram or a paragraph—

and it is so much more easy to express truth by paragraphs than by ordered statements; even the New Testament makes that clear—it would be a daring man who would try to express the genius of life as crowned in the spiritual life to which the minister calls man as a preacher, in a few sentences.

The thing we have come to feel about all life as a result of the characteristic biological study of the last twenty-five years is that the whole process of life is a vast adventure. You come to understand why Canon Streeter, who has rendered such tremendous service not only to theology, but to religion in the last years, should have chosen for the last book that he edited this very title, "Adventure." That expresses it as well as one word can. The biologist says: "You go back to that ancient day when all life was in the water, and by-and-by some vegetation creeps out on the land, and by-and-by some other follows from the water to the land—and the first great movement of the evolutionary process as it advances onward toward man has taken place. Aquatic life has begun to be land life. As you go on that vegetation spreads abroad and spreads abroad and that vegetable life is all about the world. Animal life follows it from the water; and by-and-by the vegetable life has begun to show certain traits, and by-and-by the animal life is varied"; and every change of structure is an adventure into new regions. And all the while we are gaining a certain adjustment to its environment of this life which had adventured

out of the water on the land, on the part of that vegetable life and animal life. By-and-by you see a strange creature moving around among the trees.

It would have been vastly diverting, would it not, if one had been present when that long-armed muscular creature first had that strange flash of light of intelligence in his eyes and adventured out on some act which was the result of genuine thought. And then there comes that long period of the training of intelligence. I like to fancy not the day when Prometheus stole fire from heaven, but the day in the dim past when some creature in the midst of a storm noticed the lightning setting fire to a dead tree, and as one branch fell to the ground burning, approached and took up the other end of the branch and fearfully ran away, carrying it, and slipped the other hand along the edge of the branch, and the fire bit him as if it had sharp teeth. He dropped it and ran away, but, with that quickly dawning thing that makes a man hate to run away, came back and took it up and held it to some other branch, and that other branch was ignited. He kept the fire burning until night, and noticed that the wild animals stayed away. Light and heat and all that supreme adventure!

That is what civilization is—the vast untold process of adventure of the mind of man into new regions, beginning with some such thing as that first adventure with fire long, long ago. Then,

how diverting it would have been, could one have been present when there first came to one of those curious creatures that other sense of moral value. I should like to have seen the first time a human face glowed with the sense of gladness at having chosen right—the right! And the first time a human face burned with shame at having chosen the wrong. And then, the long process of moral adventure and moral experiment. Of course I do not pretend to understand those who seem to think that all the life of all the centuries has been lived in vain, and that we should try every evil thing over again in order to be sure that we have not made a mistake and maybe it is the right thing after all. It is a big adventure out of which the ethical life of the race has come!

Then, I should like to have been present when for the first time a human face glowed with the sense of beauty. One of Paul Dunbar's books represents an old Negro sitting by the door in the moonlight with a banjo in his hand, and the rays of the moonlight glowing on the banjo and then on the face of the old Negro looking at the banjo. You see in that face in the moonlight the germ of everything that has ever been expressed in all the artistry of the most sophisticated art in all the world. Think of the first adventure in the realm of beauty! The long, long trail unwinding before you come to the Parthenon and the Sistine Madonna and the heaven-kissing beauty of Gothic architecture and all the subtle understanding

melody which sings our hearts out of us when music comes to be our master!

And then I should like to have been present when for the first time a sense of spiritual values broke like a golden sunrise across the human face —for there must have been a first time when reverence caught this untutored clod with the sheer majesty of its wonder, and there did come to that untutored clod thoughts of destiny and of God. And all the centuries since then have been a long tale of spiritual adventure. Canon Streeter was not wrong when he chose as the word indicating the very genius of the biological process itself that word "Adventure." "We are the first that ever burst into this narrow sea." Every small boy likes to read about Drake. That is because there is some love of adventure in all of us. "He was the kind of man," said someone, "whom only the farthest beacon beckons." There is something in all of us which responds to that kind of call, something which only the farthest beacon beckons. Life strangely and solemnly and gloriously and tragically and overwhelmingly has been like that. Adventure has built up the structure of human civilization in the world. It is out of that you and I come.

And the question that I want to consider for a little while to-night is whether we dare believe that the preaching ministry is the most glorious adventure in all the world, or is it true that preaching is static and heavy and lacks inspiration and in

its own genius is the very opposite of the forces it would like to call into play when its summons rings out in the world. The claim I make is precisely that preaching may be, nay, that preaching has been, again, again and again, the most glorious adventure of all. And it is with the sense of the momentum of this vast biological adventure behind me, and of preaching as the very crown of the vast evolutionary process itself, of preaching gathering up this vast momentum until preaching becomes the crowning adventure of mankind—it is with that in my mind that I speak of the adventure of preaching.

Not always is it an adventure. Sometimes I wish that every preacher could have in his study these lines by Oliver Wendell Holmes:

> "Thou mindest me of gentlefolk,
> Old gentlefolk are they:
> Thou sayest an undisputed thing
> In such a solemn way."

That is often a perfect description of what preaching actually is. One of the things that I would like to do to-night would be to make every one of us discontented with any preaching which does not have the sheer heave of the mighty biological adventure from the day the first germ cell felt the first outreach toward fuller life to that mighty consummation of which it was said that Jesus is the very crown of the evolutionary progress. I would like all of us to feel that preaching somehow is echoing the marvel and

wonder of that adventure in every moment of the life out of which it comes and every moment of its own expression in the preacher's mind.

I want to approach the matter simply. Perhaps you will feel it is an anti-climax when I say in the first place that preaching is an adventure with words. Yet it is inevitably so, because words are the weapons you and I are to use. Words are the trumpet we are to lift to our lips, words are the subtle media through which we are to express all this mounting passion which fills our own inner life with splendor. The very first solemn responsibility of every minister in respect of this matter is, so far as he is able with the good help of God, and by the discipline of the schools, and the subtler discipline of his own mind, to become a master of words. I wonder if I may dare commend to you a little book. A few years ago there was a notable man who came to Cambridge: Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch came to Cambridge to be a new sort of professor of English literature. Perhaps I can put that new sort of professorship in a sentence—I think I had better make an illustration instead of a sentence. Someone said of a great American university, once very famous for a certain type of technical scholarship, that if a man wanted to get a doctor's degree in English, this is what he was told to do: He was to buy an unabridged dictionary and count the words in the dictionary beginning with A, and go through the unabridged volume of Shakespeare's works and

count the words beginning with A that Shakespeare used, and then lay down a semi-circle to represent the norm, and then produce a curve which represents Shakespeare's conformity to the norm with reference to A words; and then the same as to the B words, and so on through the alphabet. Then he was to lay down a semi-circle to represent the linguistic noun as a whole, and then project a curve which represents Shakespeare's conformity to the norm in respect of his own use of all the words found in the dictionary itself. Somebody told that wicked story, and a person who knew the university well said, "The tragedy is that you could get a Ph.D. in that way." But when Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch went to the University of Cambridge he had a different accent. He was using literature as something coming up out of life, shining, full of radiant and fresh and vital experience. He was using it as something vitally connected with moral life so that the sentence all iridescent with the marvel of understanding speech would be seen as part and parcel of the great adventure of human living and of this good land where he must dwell. The first lectures he gave were published under the general title, "The Art of Writing." And in that little volume of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch is something which has done this for many a man, for many a minister. It has made it impossible for him to use an abstract word when he might use a concrete word. It has given a sense of language as something

dripping with actual experience and not a means of evading experience.

Did you ever think how many ministers drop into the habit of using language to avoid the expression of what they think! Did you ever realize how, especially as we grow older and more conservative, we begin to get into the habit of giving forth utterances whose qualifications have a capacity to save us from being suspected of honest thought! Did you ever suspect what tricks language will play with us if we do not meet every word with a pistol pointed at it demanding that it give us its actual meaning? I would like to do a little more than suggest that book with its own nervous racy English, redolent with a kind of pungent power the expression of a vigorous contact with reality. I commend to you an eager endeavor to become friends with words so that when you go out in the night and call them they will come as sheep might come to the call of the shepherd in some far Oriental land where the shepherd's life is still bound up with the life of the sheep. Last summer I was riding from Jericho to Jerusalem in an automobile, and as we passed one of the crags towering above the road a shepherd was standing silhouetted against the dark night, and there was a view of the sheep near, and it was a delight to forget the automobile and think of the shepherd.

Suppose one becomes a shepherd of words so that when one calls them to come every word will

come surrendering its simple meaning and subtlest essence, and every word glad to leap into holy wedlock with some other word! What if it were to become true that you and I took this friendliness with words and treated all words as a kind of solemn and sacred responsibility so that the language itself should become to us something so splendid that we would have a higher reverence for it? What if we felt it to be so noble that an ignoble phrase would hurt us and wound us, and so noble that this good old English speech, coming down with the richness of the mighty years behind us and with the haunting splendor of the Miltonic line, and with the swift clear cut of Shakespeare, and the noble system of his language, coming down with the corrosive quality of Dean Swift, and the energy and the incisiveness that is sometimes Browning, and the music that is sometimes Tennyson—words with the strange splendor of Burke, words with the curious power of Carlyle when he is really opening your heart and putting its deepest meaning into speech—suppose that we did become masters of words and then used them as the vehicle of the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ! Do you not think that would be a kind of adventure of overwhelming and splendid quality, which in its own way would make us such ministers as we have never been?

And then the preaching ministry is not only an adventure with words, but it is also an adventure with ideas; for I would remind you that, however

much we would like to do it, we cannot escape responsibility for being what Bishop McConnell has called "the pastors of men's minds." There are very easy and tempting escapes from a ministry whose searching intellectual honesty insists on knowing one's own soul and examines one's inner life with persistent and disciplined thought, and then moves out from that inner discipline to deal with the great problems of life and to express the truth so found in disciplined thought in noble speech. Many substitutes suggest themselves. I wish I knew how with all solemn urgency to direct you not to be content with any of these subterfuges, and to declare that there is no revenge surer, though it may be delayed, or more terrible, than the revenge of the mind sinned against by a minister who chooses to be content with any substitute for clear and intelligent thought. There may be seemingly golden moments when you think you can do that successfully. It is all too easy to learn the passwords to which a crowd of people will respond. How easy and paltry a thing in any generation, with a kind of clever legerdemain to learn the words which capture the enthusiasm of a prejudiced crowd and throw them out shining with the light of imagination, and to substitute them for the lonely struggle with great ideas out of which will come a thought whose power to touch other men is the expression of the deep and passionate struggle by which we reached it!

I would remind you that all along the Christian centuries there have been men who dared to make Christianity a matter of the most closely disciplined thought of which they were capable. When Paul met his Master he went away to Arabia to think out what had happened there. Remember the amazing interpretation of Raphael in one of his pictures! All the other apostles were looking up, but Paul was looking down and trying to find out what the beautiful story meant, as if the first responsibility of a man in the presence of the heavenly vision itself is to think out its meaning, that he may commend that meaning to the minds of men. The rewards of this sort of thing are not very quick. When Aquinas was busy with that long discipline which came out in the Summa, those long hours of closely disciplined thought sometimes became oppressively difficult. And sometimes, as I read the strange story and realize that he knew it was possible to substitute the light of imagination for the power of honest thought, I suspect that he was sometimes tempted to wonder if there was not a better way. I venture that when Calvin was busy working into closely knit sentences his own interpretation of Scripture, completing before he was thirty years old a theological masterpiece which for sustained dialectic and close, cogent argument has never been surpassed, I fancy there were times when he was tempted, living in that age bright with the wonder of a new Italy which had gone to Greece to find

out what beauty meant and had come back singing with the gladness of the new day, times when he was tempted to wonder if building sentences into a strong argument was not a too difficult way. And yet at our peril will we ever have the ministry as an adventure which leaves out the grapple with ideas. If the day comes when you and I have lost out of our own experience that lonely hour of embattled struggle with great ideas, that day we have begun to grow old. And the man who to the very end of his life carries on the adventure can know how Anselm felt—he of the *Cur Deus Homo*—when at the end of his life he was eager to get over into the other world because he thought he could settle some intellectual matters there better than in this world. The ministry is an adventure with ideas; particularly, an adventure with ideas in an age which has invented a great many shortcuts. I would like to believe that every young man in this group to-night would make a tremendous vow that the adventure with ideas shall be a part of his ministry until the day of his death.

The ministry is not only an adventure with ideas and words, but is also a tremendous social adventure. Here one comes upon a rather curiously difficult thing. The question is how you are going to create a mind which corresponds to the noble cosmopolitan quality of the Spirit of Jesus. For if the moment ever comes when the gospel ceases to be intolerably difficult to you, the day

has come when you have not the slightest notion what it is about. Take this whole matter of the cosmopolitan Spirit of Jesus. It is a frightful thing to ask of anybody. Not long after the war I was talking to an officer who had been very busily occupied in a certain sector of the war. I said something in praise of the French, and he said, "Why do you persist in talking about the French as if they were human beings?" That was more frank than human nature ordinarily is. But it would be significant if I could make a classification of the people you actually rule out of the circle of human beings. "Oh," you say, "there are none." But when it comes to that kind of desperate honesty which faces the actual value of every human being, do we have it? I had a curious experience this last summer in Cairo. The venders of various goods were being as disagreeable in attracting one's attention to their goods as they always are. I learned a phrase which would send off any man who was trying to get me to buy what I did not want. I learned that Arabic phrase and I said it to a man who came trying to sell me something. He looked at me and said: "You ought not to say that to me. You ought not to say it to anybody. I wonder if you know what it means." I thought I would better find out what it meant. I did so, and then I didn't use it any more! But the thing that interested me was that I had been willing to use it without trying to find out what it meant, because a young Arab

lad was making himself a nuisance. I had completely dehumanized him because he made me uncomfortable for two minutes. This matter of the attitude toward every human being, each day, is the most difficult business I know anything about. Instinctively you and I divide life into vast hierarchies, and there is one group, to which we belong, to which we give intimate fellowship, and then there are ranges down and down to which we give less and less.

This matter of the preacher's social adventure is one which I approach with hesitation. I began by telling a story against myself; and God knows I feel humble enough. The Negro—well, you remember that one day Fred Douglass met Abraham Lincoln and went away muttering, "He is the only man I ever met who did not make me feel I was a nigger." There again the thing hits you between the eyes—something subtler than speech—the lifting of an eyebrow, for instance. I am talking about the kind of social adventure out of which a minister's passionate brotherhood would come leaping in kindly speech. In any event, I am quite sure, we ought to be trying; and I am quite sure that the trying is a very difficult thing. I knew a dear old saint. He was a saint, in areas; but he had a wonderful habit, when anyone suggested a subject he did not want to face frankly, of dropping a veil over his eyes. I knew him well and could tell when it dropped. Whenever you suggested a subject of sociology or

economics that he did not want to face frankly, down went the veil, and the saint was shut inside and the humanity was shut outside! We have not so learned Christ.

I do not know any more to say about that. My memory goes back to a moment when one has been in some Mohammedan mosque, and as we looked up at the strange beauty of its Oriental architecture suddenly it came home to us that, with all the mistake of it, men were reaching out trying to find God; and in an odd moment of curious communion you found yourself one with Islam. Or perhaps sometimes in an hour in your own study you followed Gautama to that strange moment at the Bow tree whose lovely light has irradiated all Buddhistic literature to our own day, and with all the differences you are aware of, you see a disturbed and distracted personality and then suddenly a quiet life of peace.

Turner has a lovely poem called "Letty's Globe." The child's father gave her a globe so big that she could just hold it in her hands. She held it there and they pointed out the various continents and lands, and then Letty's own home, which was England. Then they pointed out the other nations. The poem ends in this way: Little Letty is standing with the globe in her hand, while she hides all England with a kiss, bright over Europe falls her golden hair! Somehow to stand in the pulpit with the world in one's hand—that would be a social adventure.

I think I will tell you how I made peace with Germany after the war. It happened in this way. I had gone to Hamburg with a dear friend of mine, an editor, whose name many of you would recognize, whose son was killed in the war. As we drove about Hamburg looking at the flowers this English editor said, "They love beauty." And then he picked out of his pocket a picture of the boy killed in the war, and he said: "You know, we have got to make the world a good world for all of us; these people here and ourselves. That is the only way to justify the sacrifice of our fine lads." I said, "It is worth coming across the Atlantic to hear you say that." And then, I was sitting in a railroad station and near me was a German mother with a little baby, and this little baby came and put one hand on one of my knees and one on the other knee, and I looked down into the face of that German baby and made peace with Germany. I thought about that amazing passage where the good God told Jonah about the babies in Nineveh who did not know their right hand from their left—"and much cattle"—the tenderest passage in the Old Testament.

Now, if the life back of the speech is a social adventure, by and by the speech will drip with the passion and pain and hope and wonder of it all, and your preaching ministry will be saturated with a new quality and power.

And then the ministry itself, of course, is a great moral adventure. The great preachers of

the world have found it so. I wish I did know how to warn you and myself against the menace of making the ministry a romantic substitute for the very realities about which we are talking. It is the simplest thing to be so caught with the flavor of moral experiences that one supposes the intoxication of feeling what the experience would be like if you did have it is the same as having it. Along that line comes the pseudo romanticism which has ruined the ministry of many a man. Do we dare to take our moral life into the pulpit, our moral failures into the pulpit? I do not mean to talk about them. I mean do we dare so frankly to face every success and every failure of our own moral struggle that, standing in the pulpit, we call everything exactly by its right name, and so give to our preaching a new power? I mean the lies you tell when suddenly tempted, and it is so much easier to deem a lie better than the truth! Or when you are envious of another minister. Or those amazing biological thrusts that come up into life, and sometimes the sheer rush of them sweeps down all the barriers. There are several things that people have done under such circumstances; there are several things that you can do. One is, never to dare to remember. Here is a minister who has a dark place and a desperate failure somewhere, and the way he deals with it is just to forget it. That is the wrong way to deal with it. To remember it and hate it and say, "That thing scarred my life, and in the

light of it I am going somehow to find such a new reality in my thought and in my will that this thing can never occur again."

We have had too much of the assumption that some temptations never come to preachers. The time has not come when preachers cease to be human beings, and the very power of the preacher's ministry will consist in the honesty with which he faces his own successes and failures. I am quite clear that any man who dares face the tale of his whole personal life before going into the pulpit will go into the pulpit with an accent which is strangely and subtly different, because now the moral struggle becomes an honest thing and he is completely saved from the convention which insists that a minister never call his own sins by their right names.

And then, last of all, the ministry is a spiritual adventure. Of course I do not need to talk about that. I walked for a long time on a moonlight night last summer on the top of a house in Nazareth, trying to visualize that day long ago when a Boy with flaming eye and all the hot adventure of life mighty in his blood walked about that old town, and went over to the edges of the great hills and looked down into the valleys, blood-stained with many an ancient battle, and dreamed a dream of making the world God's world, the world of the heavenly Father, whose face was so bright to him as he looked out into the night sky. When you and I think of him, I know how we feel,

quite simply and most rightly. We would like to bring this Child out of the past and say: "O little Boy of long ago, won't you tell me how? I would like to see the face you see, bright in the night sky. I would like to see the spiritual splendor that you see shining in the face of God. Little Lad out of the past, I would give you a welcome if you would come and see me to-day." And then sometimes he does come, and the ineffable glory of the face of God seems all bright about us. And for that beautiful moment it seems as if nothing is too hard or difficult, and that now we can put on the whole armor of Jesus Christ and go forth and fight the good fight. And then the vision of splendor fades away, and it remains to be seen whether this attitude toward life which we attained in the hour of vision will represent the purpose which may be fulfilled in hours of gloom. And as we go forth to fulfillment, then another miracle happens. Maybe we are getting along in years now. Thirty years ago it was when I went to my own first church. Maybe our words are beginning to crack a little, are not quite as real and straight as they used to be, and we want a fountain of perpetual youth for words that are getting old and for a vocabulary which is losing its youth. There is just one way. Take some cracking word and begin to live as if it were a true word, and every night the miracle is wrought and the word becomes young again as you make life a spiritual adventure.

I am talking to young men to-night. I wonder if you will remember when you are older men, and you have to fight for that vision splendid which your youth possessed—when at the peak of physical energy, before age comes with its waning vitality, you meet ever more the lower forces of life in battle array, I wonder if you will remember that the fight itself is one golden adventure God gives to you as another opportunity to vindicate the supremacy of spiritual values and so to see the new vision of the stainless face of God?

Of course that is all, and is enough. These are empty words unless you fill them with the passion of your own personality! But if you should do that, and should have adventures with words and with ideas, social adventures and moral adventures and spiritual adventures, and at the crowning moment in every adventure meet the Galilæan, you would not say as the great poet made Julian the Apostate say, "Hail, Galilæan, thou hast conquered." No, you would say, "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love, with long struggle and adventure and vision we have seen thy face, believing what we cannot prove!" Strong Son of God, go with us and crown our ministry unto the very end.

XII

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SERMON

By William L. Stidger

As a student in college I remember what an impression the big word "teleological" made on me. I was proud, first, that I could pronounce it without stumbling, and, second, that I could grasp its meaning. It has always been one of my favorite words in the dictionary. It has also been a comforting thought to me—that the world seems to be created with some design, with some purpose; that the elements of the universe seem to have an end in view. It is well for a preacher, when he preaches, to have some "end in view." We know when we play golf that the end in view is to get a lower score than our fellow golfers; in other games, to get a larger score than our rivals. Too many preachers preach without any objectives to their sermons.

What are the objectives that a minister ought to have in mind when he starts to write and to deliver a sermon?

1. *A sermon should be educational.* By a wide reading of sermons, by hearing the great preachers of our time, and by observing the types of sermons which please people, I have learned that people want facts in a sermon. A man need not be particularly eloquent if he has facts. Time and

time again, I have noted that men with new information, men with facts, will hold the attention of an audience, while a much more eloquent speaker without facts finds a restless and resisting audience. We can illustrate this very easily by remembering that when men came back from France, during the war, no matter how feeble they were as public speakers, they were listened to with great eagerness by large audiences everywhere. Men who came back from Labrador, men who bring to us newly discovered scientific truths from the laboratories of the world; the explorers from Africa, Mount Everest, the north and south poles; our Lindberghs and Gertrude Ederles; our girl aviators—if they bring facts, we are eager to listen to them.

The man who has facts today is sure of an attentive audience, especially if he speaks as one having authority. I mean by that—if his audience believes that he has gone into those facts, has experienced them, or is reporting them with authority. You cannot argue that point of authority with an audience. You cannot diagram it, you cannot blue-print it; they will know. If you speak with the note of knowledge and authority, the audience will know it, and feel it, and heed it.

To-day we are in the midst of a diamond mine of facts. We stand on the edge of great newly discovered truths which are about to remake the earth. We preachers ought to keep to the fore

on all scientific discoveries. Our audiences ought to get new truths from us, first hand.

We ought to act as a clearing house for the new discoveries in science, astronomy, chemistry, biology, physics, and invention. We preachers ought to read so widely that we keep up with modern scientific truth in every field; and then that truth ought to come to our people with the stamp of Christianity on it. Every new discovery is of God, and it ought to have a Christian interpretation when it is handed on to the people of our churches.

One of the great tragedies of youth is that it has heard little scientific truth in the churches. Then it goes to college, and science seems to conflict with religion; and youth is upset, disturbed, appalled. It has a feeling that it has been cheated and deceived.

The realm of psychology ought to be our particular field. When a preacher does not know psychology, which is the science of human conduct, he is like an organist who does not know the technique of the instrument on which he is supposed to play.

Therefore I say that the first objective of the sermon ought to be educational. The sermon which has as its first objective the educational or informing aim is pragmatic. It works; it speaks with the authority of facts. People want to know. The dramatic-book sermon is a good vehicle for this phase of the objective of the

sermon; at least, this type of sermon brings a book and the contents of a book to the audience. It is informing; it does have facts. Particularly is this true of some nonfiction book, like Pupin's *The New Reformation* or Paul DeKruif's *Microbe Hunters.*

2. *A sermon ought to be inspirational.* In this hurrying, rampant world on wheels, this era of machinery and jazz and speed, men and women come to church like used-up batteries. They ought to be able to get their mental and spiritual batteries recharged by a sermon. They ought to get enough spiritual, mental, and physical electricity to carry them through the week, or as far as Wednesday, at least.

A tired business man has a right to expect that much from a church service and a sermon. If he comes into a church service tired, weary, and worn, he has a right to expect that he will go forth from that service refreshed and quickened, just as a battery is immediately after it has been recharged.

I have a test which I like to apply to poetry, drama, music, and sermons. If they take me out of time, and make me feel eternal, then I call them great, in the finest sense of that word "great." A sermon ought to take a man, a woman, a child out of time, and make him feel eternal. It ought to remind him that he is made "just a little lower than the angels," and that he is crowned with life eternal." It ought to remind him that

he is the son of God, and that he is almost omnipotent himself.

I think that I can express about what I feel that a sermon ought to do under the second objective, which is inspiration, by quoting a little verse of my own writing:

I Am Omnipotent!

I am an Eagle, born to fly
Up Stellar Highways of the sky
Along the Milky Way, where blaze
New dawns, new planets and new days!
I am man-born, God-led, Sky-bent,
Almost Omnipotent!

I am a new-sun blazing white
Down the long world's chaotic night;
A Planet on its orbit flung,
A new Mars in the Heavens hung;
Sky-born, sun-bred, God-sent;
Almost Omnipotent!

I am some star-dust, strayed
To earth, and in His Image made
To have dominion over earth and sea.
"A little lower than the Angels" He
Has crowned me—who forever meant
That you and I should be
Almost Omnipotent!

. . . . .

Something of this point of view ought to come to every man, woman, youth, and child listening to a sermon. There ought to be an inspirational objective to every sermon which will take people

out of time, and make them know that they are eternal, just a little lower than the Godhead. We have biblical authority of great frequency and force for that objective in preaching.

I note that Bishop William A. Quayle used this objective a great deal. I have also noted that Dr. Frederick Shannon does the same thing in his sermons. I realize that most successful preachers have somehow felt this urge to inspire.

3. *A sermon should calm the restless soul.* What people need in every sermon is something that will quiet the soul. In an age which is afflicted with what we commonly call nervous breakdowns and "brain-storms," after a hectic, wild, almost hysterical week, when people come to church, they ought to come to something which will quiet their souls, something which will still their restlessness, something that will bring into their storm-tossed minds that same peace which came to Galilee.

I was speaking to a crowd of shell-shocked boys in France during the Great War. The nurse in the ward told me that the boys would have to stand up as I spoke or they couldn't keep still. It was a curious crowd of twisting, shaking, twitching boys to which I spoke. I didn't do much good in my sermon, but when I came to the prayer, I prayed: "O God, come into the hearts of these boys. Thou who didst still the waves of storm-tossed Galilee, bring peace to their bodies and to their souls."

Much to my surprise and to the surprise of the nurse, when I concluded that prayer their tremblings had perceptibly ceased. A great calm seemed to have pervaded their weary bodies at the suggestion of the power for the calm and peace that was in the soul of Jesus.

One of the objectives of every sermon preached in "these tumbling, tumultuous, turbulent, storm-tossed days," as Bishop Quayle used to call them, must be to produce a spirit of calm, quiet, meditation, reverence, and worship for the soul.

Each sermon ought to bring the "peace that passeth understanding" to what the theater calls "the tired business man" (for we have him in the church service also); to the weary, wistful mother; to the distracted, disturbed young man and woman baffled by life's problems. Each sermon ought to take a soul which is restless and dismayed and bring a sense of peace and calm and quiet to that soul; such quiet and calm as came to stormtossed Galilee when Jesus spake, "Peace, be still"; such calm as came to the men and women possessed of devils when Jesus spake to their souls; such calm as Elizabeth Barrett Browning dreamed and pictured in:

> "The little birds flew east
> And the little birds flew west;
> And I smiled to think God's greatness
> Flowed around our incompleteness;
> 'Round our restlessness, his rest."

4. *A sermon should bring the "Abundant Life" to people.* It is the preacher's privilege and

mission to teach men how to take care of their bodies. Therefore he ought to be an advocate of exercise and athletics, of all forms of recreation, or re-creation. He ought to be interested in sports. He ought to know about insulin, radium, and violet rays. He ought to be the first to tell his people that insulin will control diabetes; that the violet ray is a sure cure for rickets; that salt is bad for the arteries—that a heavy salt eater will surely be predisposed to hardening of the arteries.

He ought to be the champion of all cultural life, and his sermons ought to radiate with an interest in music, drama, poetry, and art. He ought to bring people into the "abundant life" of a new appreciation of the beautiful in nature. If he teaches people to love sunsets and roses and bridal wreath, he will make life more abundant for them.

Bringing to people the abundant life means bringing to them a love for nature; it means teaching them how to care for their bodies, it means teaching them to have an interest in keeping their sluggish bodies alert through constant and regular exercise. It means teaching them to love books, and great poetry, and great art. One of the surest ways to carry the abundant life to people in sermons is through the mission of great books.

Phillips Brooks used to say that he had hundreds of sermons, but that he had only one text: "I am come that they might have life, and that they

might have it more abundantly." That text might well be the everlasting text of every preacher, and of every sermon that a man preaches; and that objective of the abundant life might well be the one end and aim of every sermon.

5. *A sermon should bring the plan of salvation to the attention of all men, everywhere, and at all times.* Until men have rediscovered the sense of sin there is little hope for a final reconciliation with God the Father. The prodigals of life must be reminded that they have a Father. Therefore the objective of every sermon ought to be reconciliation.

The plan of salvation includes this sense of sin, this consciousness of the need of a higher power than our own. We no longer seem to be aware of sin or of wrongdoing. We feel that we are all right; that we need no reconciliation, no returning to the Father in penitence and humility.

When we have induced this sense of sin, a feeling of repentance is the next step in the plan of salvation. Then comes what we call, in the New Testament phrase, "rebirth." Doctor Bucke in his *Cosmic Consciousness* takes a thousand pages to show scientifically, through laboratory work which reaches back to the beginning of time, that all great geniuses, all men who have in any way affected the trend of human events, have experienced this sudden upheaval—call it regeneration, call it rebirth, call it conversion, call it reconciliation with God; call it what you will. Doctor

James, of Harvard; Doctor Coe, of Union; Doctor McDougal, Doctor Bucke—all the great psychologists recognize its place in human experience. The New Testament recognizes it, and the world of literature recognizes it.

Tolstoy's *The Resurrection* is the story of an old-fashioned Methodist type of conversion. John Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy* is such a story. Poetry, fiction, psychology, and drama recognize this experience as universal. It is the dominant note of the New Testament plan of salvation; that, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, men may be reconciled to the Father.

This is the great, dominant objective of a sermon: to bring men back to God; to reconcile them with the Father through Jesus Christ and his church.

The man who has had in his life this upheaval, this coming of "cosmic consciousness," this sudden realization of "oneness with God," this "rebirth," will understand, as did John Wesley, and Whitefield, and Sankey, and Torrey, and Moody, and Chapman, and Sunday, that there is no more important objective in the sermon than to lead men to this experience; to point out its possibility, and to urge human beings to this high and holy moment.

I cannot be content to close a discussion of this last objective of the sermon without buttressing what I have to say by quoting briefly from Gamaliel Bradford's *Life and I*. In the chapter on

"Christ and Not-I" he talks of this experience of conversion or rebirth.

He first makes a tremendous plea for a renaissance of the "sense of sin." He refers to Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, telling the story of its scientifically educated hero, who kills a hateful old woman so that he may live his life with her money. He tells of how this hero suffers the bitterest anguish of remorse afterward. Then he adds: "This may be regarded as typical of the complications in which the modern idea of expedient morals may sometimes result."

Then he adds two paragraphs about sin and the sense of sin which are worth remembering in the light of this final objective of the sermon which I present:

"For century upon century sin has played an enormous part in the world. The saints have recognized it, reviled it, condemned it, have pointed out its enthralling horror in others; and bewailed its still more evident and smothering tyranny in themselves."

. . . . . .

"Perhaps we have lost as well as gained, and it may be that sin, like some other things, is not quite dead yet."

Then Mr. Bradford turns from this sense of sin to the experience of repentance and conversion from sin, and says:

"And then comes religion, and souls worn out with the wickedness and the weariness of this

world, sick of their own failures and frailty, and torn with the sense of sin, throw wide the doors to a divine revelation of comfort and relief."

. . . . . .

"And then there came the presence of God, the exquisite touch of Christ upon the heart, the assurance of his salvation, bringing into it comfort and hope, and the relief and ecstasy were apparently as poignant as the despair had been. For the moment, at any rate, sin and the burden of sin were cast behind, and the radiance of pure joy filled and overwhelmed the spirit with a rapture of delight."

Then Mr. Bradford quotes Professor Underwood in what he terms "his dispassionate, psychological study" of conversion when Underwood says: "The most remarkable fruit of conversion is seen in the manner in which it has brought about complete and permanent deliverance from every known sin. Indisputable evidence on this point is so abundant that we are embarrassed with a wealth of riches."

Finally, Mr. Bradford concludes, after this quotation from Professor Underwood:

"If this is true, conversion was indeed a magnificent spiritual instrument, and the loss of it would be a deplorable deprivation for humanity."[1]

There need be and, indeed, there is no "deplorable deprivation for humanity" if the final

[1] Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company and the author, Gamaliel Bradford.

objective of the sermon is that of bringing men to a "sense of sin," to a psychology of repentance, and of reconciliation with God through the experience of conversion or rebirth.

I sum it up in a phrase which I found in two lines by Frances Ridley Havergal:

> "Reality, Reality,
> Lord, Jesus Christ, thou art to me!"

These, then, are the "ends in view"; these ought to be the dominant objectives of the sermon:

1. Educational.
2. Inspirational.
3. Calm-producing.
4. To bring "The Abundant Life."
5. Reconciliation with God.

XIII

THE AUTHORITY OF THE PREACHER

By Bishop William F. Anderson

The attitude of our times toward the question of authority in religion has been variously characterized. There are those who believe that the age resents, even despises, authority of every kind; that this is a stiff-necked generation, fully bent upon following its own whims and fancies regardless of all standards of truth.

On the other hand, a representative leader declared some time ago: "The mind of the age is ready and anxious to come under the authority of truth. Let us not wrong the temper of our age however much we may share in its mental perplexities. I am confident," he says, "that nothing would receive so true a welcome from the mind of this age as some great vindication of religious faith."

Among the questions most often mooted in this connection is that of the authority of the preacher. We hear much of the "decline of the power of the pulpit" and of the "passing of the preacher" as an authoritative factor in the affairs of to-day. If the prophets of God are really losing their grip the fact bodes ill for the future, not only of the profession, but of society and all its

interests. For "where there is no vision, the people perish."

The fact that many to-day believe this to be true is a sufficient apology for our quest for the authority of the preacher. Let us admit at the outset that some types of authority for the ministry, which were formerly held in high honor, have largely passed away.

There are still unmistakable vestiges of a form of authority attaching to the preacher which was professionalism pure and simple. High respect for "the cloth" was everywhere apparent. The chief elements in this quasi-authority were ecclesiastical millinery, a conventional holy tone, and a certain sanctimonious bearing in the pulpit and out of it. This, to be sure, has become largely obsolete and we may well thank God that it has. It conduced to effeminacy in the ministry, and was a deadly enemy to downright manliness. In the day when this obtained, the preacher could speak *ex cathedra* upon almost any subject without having his word questioned, but this business is now at an end. The demand of to-day is that the preacher shall be a man among men, in his public utterances and in every other way, without the slightest respect to the "cut of his jib," the style of his clothing, the tone of his voice, or the bearing of his person. This is certainly a clear and distinct gain for the ministry itself. In the new order of things the spirit of the times is saying to every true prophet as God

said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet."

Another type of authority in the ministry, inherited from the past and still lingering somewhat until now, is the High Church conception. It is true, to be sure, that it still holds sway over many minds. It is found not only in the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, but in that form of Protestantism known as High Church. It is, of course, a survival of the priestcraft of the Middle Ages. It grows out of the so-called doctrine of the apostolic succession, which Phillips Brooks characterized as "the purest figment." In the realm of the spiritual it would be difficult to conceive of anything more superficial or more mechanistic. It is utterly astounding that so many minds in the past have seemed to find rest here. How so earnest a soul as John Henry Newman could find contentment in it is one of the strangest of the psychological phenomena of history and passes comprehension. Once accepted, we can see how it might minister to intellectual repose, but the acceptance of it would seem to require a paralysis of the rational faculties amounting well-nigh to stultification. This species of purely mechanical authority has no future where the results of clear thinking are sought and properly evaluated. Bishop Joseph B. Lightfoot, one of the master minds of the Church of England, in his plea for but two orders in "The Christian Ministry," published in connection with his Commentary on Philippians, argued this subject

to its convincing finality. It is said that he repudiated this view in his old age. But his argument represents him at the prime of his thinking power and was so conclusive that it cannot be repudiated except by vacating the essential principles of sound reason and the established laws of thought.

The authority of traditionalism has in recent years been fading out of our life as never before. There was a time when the bolstering up of truth by the citation of lists of great names from out the past was a popular and effective method of teaching. This was the method of the Pharisees which our Lord met and rejected. But the day for this is largely past. Certain modern powerful influences have been at work invading the domain of traditionalism. Chief among these is the scientific temper of mind so characteristic of every phase of the scholarship of our times.

To its honor be it said that the best thought of our day has not been content with second-hand knowledge in the realm of religion. There has been a vast amount of original research and discovery. Particularly is this the case touching the sources of Scripture teaching. In biblical research the cry has been "Back to the original documents"—the primal source of information. In theology the cry has been "Back to Christ." In the light of these investigations we have come to see that there has been in the past considerable of the "laying aside of the commandments of God

and the holding of the traditions of men," as in our Lord's day upon earth. The practical benefit of the new movement to the cause of Christianity is thus summarized by a great scholar, who comprehends the subject critically from the viewpoint of science and, at the same time, sympathetically as a devout Christian: "Prior to the new biblical science there was really no rational basis in thoughtful minds either for the date of any of the New Testament books or consequently for the historical truth of any of the events narrated in them. Gospels, Acts, and Epistles were all alike shrouded in this uncertainty. Hence the validity of the eighteenth-century skepticism. But now all this kind of skepticism has been rendered obsolete and forever impossible; while the certainty of enough of Saint Paul's writings for the practical purpose of displaying the beliefs of the apostles has been established as well as the certainty of the publication of the Synoptics within the first century. An enormous gain has thus accrued to the objective evidence of Christianity. It is most important that the expert investigator should be exact, and as in any other science, the lay public must take on authority as trustworthy only what both sides are agreed upon. But, as in any other science, experts are apt to lose sight of the importance of the main results agreed upon in their fighting over lesser points still in dispute. Now it is enough for us that the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians and

Corinthians have been agreed upon by all as genuine and that the same is true of the Synoptics so far as concerns the main doctrine of Christ himself."

The establishment of these facts beyond the peradventure of a doubt has put into the hands of the Christian preacher of to-day a leverage such as the preachers of no former generation possessed.

Still another species of authority held sway long in religious teaching. I refer to the authority of cold intellectualism based solely upon use of the logical faculty in the search for truth. The demands of the æsthetic, the moral and the spiritual natures were disregarded, and the result was a high species of rationalism.

The general change which has occurred in this realm finds definite and forceful illustration in one of the most interesting cases in the world's history—the case of George John Romanes. Educated in the best university of Europe, he early became enamored of Darwinism. He distinguished himself at a very early age for his original research in scientific subjects. In that early day he issued a work entitled *A Candid Examination of Theism*, by Physicus, in which he reasoned from the extreme ground of Atheism. But before his untimely death in 1894 he is brought by the "ripening experiences of life," to use his own words, to say, "I see now it is Christianity or nothing." In Bishop Gore's noteworthy book, *Thoughts on Religion*, published since the death

of Romanes, he tells us in substance that the mistake of his earlier reasoning was his undue exaltation of the logical faculty; that when he listened to the pleadings of his intuitions and gave heed to the ideals of his moral and æsthetic nature, he found that the Christian's God satisfied every demand of the reason and every need of life. He made the very important discovery that our reason is not the whole of us; that the deepest facts of the soul are its affections, its aspirations, and its hungerings, and that they are satisfied only in God.

Hear his noble dying confession, composed but a few hours before his departure from this life:

"Amen! Now lettest thou thy servant, Lord,
Depart in peace according to thy Word!
Although mine eyes may not have fully seen
Thy great salvation; surely there have been
Enough of sorrow, and enough of sight
To show the way from darkness into light.
And thou hast brought me through a wilderness of pain
To love the sorest paths, if soonest they attain.

"Enough of sorrow for the heart to cry
Not for myself, nor for my kind am I.
Enough of sight for reason to disclose
The more I learn, the less my knowledge grows.
Ah! Not as citizens of this our sphere,
But aliens militant we sojourn here,
Surrounded by the hosts of evil and of wrong
Till thou shalt come again, with all thine angel throng.

"As thou hast found me ready to thy call
Which stationed me upon the outer wall,
And quitting hopes and joys that once were mine
To pace with patient step this narrow line—
Oh, may it be that coming soon or late
Thou still shalt find thy soldier at the gate;
Who then may follow thee, till sight needs not to prove,
And faith shall be dissolved in knowledge of thy love."

A contrast of the assurance of these noble words with the haziness of Romanes' earlier reasoning reveals the result of the finding of the true inward authority in religion.

Thus it is apparent that the drift of the critical spirit in recent years has resulted in the rejection of every form of superficial outward authority. Only the authority of reality in religion has standing to-day. Nothing short of that will meet the test of these times. It is well that it is so.

With so much to clear the way we now wish to institute a quest for an authority which will suffice for the preacher of to-day. We present this phase of the subject under two general heads, namely, *The Authority for the Preacher* and *The Authority in the Preacher*.

In order to speak with an authority which will command a hearing, the preacher must have an objective standard of truth. He must have some tribunal to which he may refer all questions with which he deals, with a confidence that will beget

strength in himself and produce conviction in those whom he addresses. But where is so great a desideratum to be found? We have it in the passage, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The significance of the passage is very much wider than in its application to the merely predictive writings of the Scriptures. It is a well-known fact that the word "prophecy" in both Old Testament and New Testament times was not at all limited to prediction as it has come to be so generally with us. It embraced the entire idea of spiritual teaching, insight, interpretation, proclamation, application. So giving a wide and, as we believe, perfectly legitimate meaning to the passage, we affirm that the preacher may plant himself confidently upon this proposition: *The words and spirit of our Lord constitute the dependable outward standard of truth in spiritual teaching.*

In this connection our good friend Romanes serves us yet once again in a passage of inestimable value. He says:

"One of the strongest pieces of objective evidence in favor of Christianity is not sufficiently enforced by apologists. Indeed, I am not aware that I have ever seen it mentioned. It is the absence from the biography of Christ of any doctrine which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy or elsewhere—has had to discount. This negative argument is almost as strong as the positive one from which Christ did

teach. For when we consider what a large number of sayings are recorded of, or at least attributed to him, it becomes most remarkable that in literal truth there is no reason why any of his words should ever pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete. 'Not even now could it be easy.' says John Stuart Mill, 'even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life. Contrast Jesus Christ in this respect with other thinkers of like antiquity. Even Plato, who, though some 400 years B. C. in point of time, was greatly in advance of him in respect of philosophic thought—not only because Athens then presented the extraordinary phenomenon which it did of genius in all directions never since equaled, but also because he, following Socrates, was, so to speak, the greatest representative of human reason in the direction of spirituality—even Plato, I say, is nowhere in this respect as compared with Christ. Read the dialogues and see how enormous is the contrast with the Gospels in respect of reason and to sayings shocking to the moral sense. Yet this is confessedly the highest level of human reason on the lines of spirituality, when unaided by alleged revelation.' "

Nothing could be more to the point in this connection than the experience of Dr. E. Stanley Jones as recorded in his little volume, *The Christ of the Indian Road.*

"I thought my task was more complex than I now see it to be; not less difficult, but less complex. When I first went to India I was trying to hold a very long line—a line that stretched clear from Genesis to Revelation—on to Western Civilization and to the Western Christian Church. I found myself bobbing up and down that line fighting behind Moses and David and Jesus and Paul and Western Civilization and the Christian Church. I was worried. There was no well-defined issue. I found the battle almost invariably being pitched at one of these three places: the Old Testament, or Western Civilization, or the Christian Church. I had the ill-defined, but instinctive feeling that the heart of the matter was being left out. Then I saw that I could, and should, shorten my line, that I could take my stand at Christ and before that non-Christian world refuse to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The sheer storm and stress of things had driven me to a place that I could hold. Then I saw that there is where I should have been all the time. I saw that the gospel lies in the person of Jesus, that he himself is the Good News, that my own task was to live and to present him. My task was simplified.

"But it was not only simplified—it was vitalized. I found that when I was at the place of Jesus I was every moment upon the vital. Here at this place all the questions in heaven and earth were being settled. He was the one question that settled all others.

"I still believed in the Old Testament as being the highest revelation of God given to the world before Jesus' coming; I would inwardly feed upon it as Jesus did. But the issue was further on. A Jain lawyer, a brilliant writer against Christianity, arose in one of my meetings and asked me a long list of questions regarding things in the Old Testament. I replied: 'My brother, I think I can answer your questions, but I do not feel called to do so. I defined Christianity as Christ. If you have any objections to make against him, I am ready to hear them and answer them if I can.' He replied: 'Who gave you this authority to make this distinction? What church council gave you this authority?' I replied that my own Master gave it to me—that I was not following a church council, but trying to follow him, and he himself had said, 'Ye have heard it said of old time, . . . but I say unto you,' so I was simply following his lead, for he made his own word final even in Scripture. I was bringing the battle up from that incomplete stage of Revelation to the final—to Jesus. Revelation was progressive, culminating in him. Why should I, then, pitch my battle at an imperfect stage when the perfect was here in him?"[1]

Here, then, in the words and Spirit of Christ, is found the outward standard of authority for the preacher. If we take our stand there and are faithful to it, no man can gainsay our position.

[1] The Abingdon Press, publishers.

But there must be an authority in the preacher, an authority of which he himself shall be deeply and always conscious, and hence an authority in his mien and message which men will recognize—which they will feel and cheerfully confess. Vital though the words of Jesus be, it does not suffice for the preacher to recite them in parrot-like fashion. There must be something in the man betokening a moral authority which cannot be resisted. The example of Christ himself must guide us in our quest here. His was a ministry of authority. How can we reproduce and realize it for ourselves and our generation in behalf of an authoritative message so needful to-day? His life and ministry is our most fruitful source of study in this connection. It is apparent at once that he was conscious in his deepest being of an authority which he boldly asserted against the false and superficial standards of truth and teaching generally accepted in his time. Five times in the Sermon on the Mount he asserts his superior authority over the accepted standards of those whom he addressed: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old . . . But I say unto you . . ." No wonder the Pharisees were offended. These were the teachings which they held in highest reverence, which were indeed sacrosanct to them. He did not argue the case, he simply asserted his own standard over against their accepted standards. And, strangest of all, though their prejudices were up in arms against the predicament in

which they were forced, there was an appeal to their inward sense of right against which no objection could be brought. Jesus made no argument. He simply asserted his position again and again and again. Here is the greatest instance of dogmatic assertion to be found in literature or history. What was its significance? How can it be justified?

In the study of this subject I have found a very helpful volume, *The Authority of Christ*, by Dr. David W. Forrest, of Edinburgh, published by T. & T. Clark. The third chapter, "Christ's Authority on God," is very much to the point.

Doctor Forrest says: "Clearly some definition is needed of the kind of authority which belongs to him. For he does not resolve in any manner the speculative difficulties which have bewildered the greatest philosophic minds of all ages. He has no 'proofs' of the Divine Existence to give. When we turn to him from such a criticism as Kant's or Hegel's of the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments, we feel ourselves in a different world. The metaphysical aspect of the ultimate Reality never concerns him. His whole mission, indeed, was to reveal and attest that Reality; but he approaches it ethically, not speculatively. He verifies it to man not by intellectual demonstration, but by the illumination of the total moral experience.

"The primary character of all Christ's teaching about God is that it springs from an immediate

sense of personal harmony with him. He speaks of him not as one who is convinced by argument, but as one who has seen and known because he has experienced. He does not contemplate the divine from without; he bears witness to it from within. His whole life is a conscious and unbroken dependence on the Father, alike in the surrender of prayer and the surrender of service; and this dependence is so absolute as to constitute identity. The two thoughts are inseparable. 'I do always the things that please the Father' passes at once into 'I and the Father are one' (John 8. 29; 10. 30). It is this basal fact of profound communion and oneness which inspires all his utterances regarding God and God's purpose toward men, and gives them the accent of absolute assurance. 'Whatsoever the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.' And as he does not reach his own knowledge of God as Father by demonstrative reasoning, he does not attempt to convey it to others by demonstration. It is not a deduction from something more sure than itself: it is the presupposition of all his thought and feeling, the fundamental truth which gives reality to everything else. The value of every phenomenon, whether inward impulse or natural object, is that it involves God and in its measure manifests him. But the degree in which anyone perceives this manifestation depends not so much on his intellectual keenness as on his spiritual quality, on his fidelity to the deepest instincts of his nature.

Hence Christ's aim was so to quicken these instincts in him as to enable him to see for himself in human life and in the universe around the inevitable suggestions which guarantee the divine.

"God is to be interpreted by the highest in us, by our purest and most generous affections; that is Christ's central thought, which he asserts but does not attempt to vindicate. To him is it self-evident, and ultimate certainty, not capable of demonstration and not requiring it; an open secret to be read by every unsophisticated and reverent soul.

"He never once speaks from the standpoint of one attempting to remove doubts of God's existence; but always as seeking to recall men to the remembrance of a God whom they have forgotten, or to correct their misconceptions of him, or to reclaim them to his service. The question for him is not to prove that God is, but to show *what* he is, and how we should conceive of him. And the method which he adopts always implies that it is unreasonable to suppose that God's nature or his relation to us can be understood except in the light of what we are, of our personal character and our dealings with others. He reveals God to men by revealing men to themselves, by disclosing the spiritual realities of their own life.

"Further, it is obvious that no speculative proofs of the Divine Existence yield the results which religion demands. However convinced metaphysically a man may be that God is perfect

goodness, that does not of necessity produce in him the spirit of obedience, trust, and love. To know God as Christ knew him is not an intellectual act, but a personal experience: it means a fellowship between the divine and the human, in which there is a continual giving and receiving. God verifies himself not as an idea, but as a power 'to kindle or restrain' in every impulse, resolve, and aspiration. We are sure of him because of what he is to us, because of the place he has in our life, ruling, rebuking, uplifting. It was this inward and indisputable knowledge which Christ himself had and which he strove to realize in others. And it is this alone which men are in search of, the transfiguration of character by the indwelling divine. But character is molded by action far more than by thought. The secret of it lies not in the intellect, but in the will; not in the comprehension of truth, but in practical loyalty to the highest and best. And it is through such loyalty that men gain the evidence which attests to them Duty, God, and Immortality. Nor does the cogency of that evidence depend on the degree in which it can be formally stated and vindicated. In all that constitutes their religious value, these truths may be as vitally held by a peasant as by any doctor of the schools."

"To know the laws of the universe and to order and fashion our conduct in accordance with them," declared Huxley, "is the whole of life." Out of Christ's union with God came a confidence in the

integrity of God's universe which is one of the most impressive and compelling realities in the history of the world—Jesus brings to his task an inward consciousness which is truly wonderful.

The New Testament record shows that there was an authority in the manner and teaching of Jesus which men felt instinctively and which they confessed again and again; "Never man spake like this man," and again they said, "For his word was with power," and again they asked, "Who gave thee this authority?" They were forever confessing to him, "Thou art the Son of God."

How, then, can the preacher of to-day attain something like this? Unless he have it his words are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The life of God in the preacher's own soul gives his message the only authority which will meet the demands of such a day and such a world as ours. Every preacher must achieve this authority for himself by godly living. If any man neglect this, he does it at the peril of his own soul and of any high usefulness in his pulpit ministry. Nothing else can give the preacher's message the ring of reality.

The poet Lowell once declared, "The great revealers speak to the age out of eternity." The surest way of doing that is for the preacher to have eternity in his own heart. Mark's record is very significant, "And He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal

sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Just that "they should be with him," not that they might study his method or observe his way, but only that "they should be with him." Out of companionship with Christ comes the message from Christ to the flock. Only thus can the preacher really feed Christ's sheep.

Let us turn again to our one great Exemplar. No Socrates or Gamaliel led the mind of Jesus along the hidden, tortuous pathways of speculative philosophy. But very early in his career he matriculated as an earnest student in life's great university, and began to search out the great underlying principles of this human existence. At the early age of twelve years, he had discovered one tremendously vital truth. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This much, at least, was clear already, namely, that life could not be interpreted upon any basis of selfishness. For a man to recognize that he is in the world in God's behalf—that is the starting point of a divine career. The humble carpenter's home in despised Nazareth forms the environment, in the midst of which he works out other problems. As time goes on, the deep watches of the night find him upon lonely mountainside, in dark valley, 'midst the woe of throbbing populations, and in the awful garden, trying to penetrate the meaning of life's oppressive mysteries and to solve its significance for himself and for other men. In the midst of it all a greater

One than Socrates or Gamaliel is his personal teacher. It is the Spirit of God, who leads him on, away beyond the boundaries of human knowledge out into light as clear as God's mind, and into life as deep as God's boundless love, until at last all worlds, all times, all problems, all interests, even the meaning of the cross for himself and its relation to the world's redemption, stand out clear and distinct in light ineffable. Thus is he led in his great prayer to the noble comment upon his own life; "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." In a word, that peculiar quality of authority which characterized his teachings was due to his clear, strong consciousness of the life of God within his own soul, made vital to him as to all men by the Spirit of God. That is a beautiful conception of Doctor Lyman's in his *Preaching in the New Age.* He argues conclusively that preaching is both an art and an incarnation. And so it is.

Out of a life *with* God comes the authority to speak *for* God. No man can preach great sermons and have a great ministry out of a shallow life. The true prophet must cast out into the depths. He must ever hear deep calling deep in his secret innermost being. The diligent nurturing of this life must be the preacher's Holy of holies. Says a recent writer, "In all ages the sorest of the inward problems that perplex the human spirit has been the 'Silence of God.' The hunger of

man for an authentic voice from heaven for some clear knowledge of the hidden mind of God" has ever marked the pathway of the generations of the earnest souls of earth.

Here at last in the voice of God's true prophet the silence is broken. The infinite love becomes vocal and the voice of God's messenger, clear, distinct, and authoritative, becomes vibrant with the reality of life, of destiny, of eternal worlds and of God. No other enterprise on earth offers such a challenge to the talents of men. To interpret the mind of God for human need and progress is the supreme opportunity offered to the sons of God.

In the dear fellowship of an opportunity so challenging and a task so worthwhile and so altogether supreme, let us devoutly thank God.

XIV

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, D.D.

(Answering questions propounded by students of the Theological School of Boston University.)

Question: What distinguishes a sermon from an essay on ethics or morality?

Answer: A sermon derives its meaning from the root of the Word itself. It means to hold forth or speak in a public manner with a lively voice concerning those things that relate to the highest ideals and practices of humanity. It is therefore a special form of utterance dedicated to this great end, and is differentiated from the essay, which is a literary production, for the reasons stated. The latter is a written composition sometimes brought into the pulpit for the comfort of the audience! The former is a lively discourse based on hortatory lines with a sufficient background behind its utterance. If anyone goes to sleep during the sermon, the thing to do is to wake up the preacher.

Question: What can be said to be the final test of the sermon? Should it be argumentative, proving things to the people, or only consider the training of them?

Answer: That depends on the situation and the audience. I think that we do not think enough

about the educative influence of the audience upon the preacher. As a rule, wherever you find a distinguished preacher of the intellectual and persuasive type, his audience does much for him in the direction of his mind. He gets back from the audience what he gives it, and the reciprocity is at all times exceedingly useful. When you find an audience which makes a man inspirational and popular it is because the two conspire in that direction.

The aim of the sermon should be subject to the conditions which prevail in its delivery; and the charm of the delivery is in the power of its adaptation. I have known many a preacher who grew monotonous because when you had heard him once you had heard him always. It was always the same well-ordered, stately discourse. Yet on occasions the people would have been thankful if instead of a Pullman train a freight had come thundering down! There was the explanation of Beecher's superiority. He always had a surprise in store. If he was philosophical in the morning, he was inspirational at night. He would sometimes astonish his congregation by his austerity or again by his exquisite tenderness. Not everyone is capable of this kind of preaching. All, however, can cultivate the charm of variety. Remember what Paul calls the "many-tinted wisdom of God." I would not prescribe any particular form of preaching, except that which elevates the spiritual and gives it that sense of

oneness and intimacy which is really the best result of preaching. It is said of the Rev. Benjamin M. Adams, of the New York East Conference, that when he prayed, men felt as if God were in the sanctuary; a reproduction of that scene at the dedication of Solomon's Temple—when the priest and the people were as one. This result comes only when all the elements of human nature are focused at their best for the great espousals of the soul to its Maker.

Question: What message does the minister have for the masses of laboring men who conceive of the church as an instrument of their bosses to keep them down?

Answer: The church is independent; she has her own life, mission, and message, and owes nothing to any man as man, but everything to all men for the sake of Christ. It seems to me that the message of the church to the man who thus conceives of it is to tell him that he is laboring under a very serious delusion. We are not here to preach that heaven is for those who fizzle out on earth. There are those who desire that industrial justice shall take precedence of the gospel. But if you could provide a perfect social system, which is at best only a by-product of the spiritual life, it wouldn't satisfy man's highest aspirations and deepest longings. Therefore I should tell such a man, that, so far as I know the church, he is seriously mistaken about her, and that it is not her business to proclaim any special type of

economics, but to insist on that underlying justice, fairness, and friendship which must prevail before any political or social system can operate. In other words, I believe that in the pulpit the love of love is greater even than the love of truth. The man who has that love is not in peril of becoming a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The love which sees in every man an object of sacrificial service is the glory of a true minister, irrespective of economic theories.

Question: Should a sermon for the average audience be on the level of a child's mind or above it? Can we be fair to both at the same time?

Answer: I think you had better cater in the average audience to the adult mind. What you have to say to the child mind say in a special utterance and then dismiss the children. If you want to give a message to the children, give it directly, simply, and straightforwardly. It is a consummate art of which I am not capable. I should make sprats talk like whales. Keep the best you have for the people bearing the actual burdens of life.

Question: When is a political subject justified in the pulpit?

Answer: When it invades the moral realm. Therefore Roman Catholics have the right to discuss the merits and demerits of secular education. If they choose to say that our present system of education supplies no adequate motive for life, that is their right. If Jews wish to argue

from the pulpit that prejudice against certain races is wrong, they have a right to do it. If a Methodist preacher chooses to discuss prohibition as a political measure deeply affecting the moral and religious life and safety of the nation, he is within his rights in so doing, and those who accuse him of bigotry commit the offense with which they charge him.

Question: Is it the mission of the modern preacher to bring peace and comfort to the members of his congregations, most of whom are under great nervous tension six days in the week, or so to exhort and challenge his people as to induce them to enter into the social struggle at a higher rate of speed and under a greater tension?

Answer: That depends on his own common sense—by which sense I mean the sense which men have in common when they have it. There is no use in preaching about the evils of dancing to a wooden-legged man. There are congregations which rather resemble the valley of dry bones. A few years ago we had in Brooklyn one of those itinerant evangelists who peddle bootleg religion, trouble the church, and enlist the unlicensed imagination of the neighborhood. He used to placard the borough with the question, "Where are the dead?" His question came to me. I confessed ignorance of the whereabouts of all the dead, but said that I knew about twenty in the front pews in my own church. I think anyone is

justified in addressing a hortative message to such complacent saints and stir up to love and good works.

When people have real trouble, never forget that it is the first business of the pulpit to comfort them and sustain God. Always remember that life at its best is for many of your congregation a severe struggle, and what they need is not denunciation, but sympathy. They do not have to be driven, but led into the green pastures. There they can stay long enough to hear the guiding voice and to compose their souls.

Question: Is the doctrine of the Trinity vital to present-day preaching?

Answer: I do not find it in the New Testament at all as a dogmatic statement. I find it in the after developments of theology due to the efforts of certain great thinkers of the Eastern Church who tried to convey the teachings of the New Testament about the Father, the Son and the Spirit in that formula. In endeavoring to present the doctrine to an intelligent audience I should confine myself to the Christianity which is of Christ. I have no right to go beyond that in behalf of metaphysical interpretations, especially when the rights of believing souls are involved. Any preacher who presents his dogmatic system in place of the gospel of love, mercy, and purification as derived from Christ has a poor conception of strategy in the pulpit.

Question: What do you think of the saying,

"Let a minister confine himself to religion and keep out of the realm of economics"?

Answer: It is a case of "the galled jade wincing." The same thing was said in the days of slavery as a defense of human bondage, and it is now said by men who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are suspicious. I am wary of advice from men who would not know true religion if they met it in the street. Let them remedy their own mistakes. We will take care of the preaching. The late Lord Oxford, generally known as Mr. Asquith, was in the company of men belonging to a manufacturers' association, and they were inclined to be jocular with him about the mistakes of lawyers and the faults of the legal profession, whereupon Mr. Asquith replied, "Gentlemen, I have spent forty years of my life as a lawyer getting business men out of trouble."

Question: What is the value of psychiatry in the Christian ministry?

Answer: Of course it has its place, as all developments of the relations of body to mind have. But I am inclined to leave this study to those who are proficient in it. The minister should not aspire to be a specialist on those more exacting lines of treatment. He has to deal with the fundamental interests of life; what he does in his pastoral relationship is another thing than preaching and should be reserved for private interviews.

Question: In the preparation of the minister for his work emphasis has been placed on his personal habits of study and devotion. Does not the layman have an equal responsibility in creating the environment in which alone the preacher can come to his best?

Answer: No people are so exorbitant in their demands upon the clergy as the American people are. The English clergyman has a more peaceful time; so does the German clergyman; so do all the Continental clergy. They are not called on as we are to be guide, philosopher, friend, and moral mechanician of a general sort to the whole community.

It will be a sorry day for the minister when he is not required to solve any problems. Nevertheless, you can carry a good thing too far. The toll we pay for the habit of driving ministers, rabbis, and priests is a high one. Churches would do well to release a minister with a great message to the business of preaching, provided he saturates his message with actual contact with the people of his parish. Then it will not lose the note of actuality. Allow other men to do the work which they can do without requiring him to serve tables. The idea from the early days of New England that the minister must take the entire care of souls for a given district has been rather thrust aside by the implacable circumstances of modern life. A man who can induce people to hear divine truth, as he believes and understands it, is a godsend and

should be carefully shielded on his task by those fortunate enough to possess him.

Question: Should a minister hold any time inviolably his own? Or should he keep himself at the service of the flock?

Answer: I have always followed the latter rule, and have never lost by it. Of course I do not offer my course as advice or even suggestion. I am not an example for my brethren, for which they can thank the Lord and take courage! But I want to see any man if he wants to see me. If you know the art of dismissing people without their being aware of it you can get through a great deal of interviewing satisfactorily.

Question: Would you outline the method you pursue in your reading?

Answer: I read every chance I get, because my conviction is that of Balzac, who looked around his study, which he had reserved for an hour, and said, "Now for some real people." When you see a bookshelf lined with the heart's blood of mighty spirits, there you behold a feast of fat things and of wines on the lees, well refined (if I may now dare to use the latter expression!). There you come into living contact with the great minds of the ages. So reading to me is not a duty, but a delight, as it is for every man of intelligence. I read three hours when I go to bed, and wake up anticipating two hours more before I breakfast.

Question: Since all preachers represent vast

differences, what is the lowest common denominator that makes a man a success?

Answer: Humanity. If a man has not that, even the Lord himself cannot do much for him. Plain humanity! By humanity I mean the possession of those qualities which are commonly and instinctively recognized as belonging to the better type of our order—in brief, a true man. Grace can do wonders for a weakling, but the traces of his weakness will always be in him. It is an inspiring experience to see a gentleman of the proper stamp and quality dealing with God's purposes for the human race. Humanity, following the usual and instinctive recognition of the qualities that make it, is the basic equipment which divine grace dedicates.

Question: A personal question from a minister who served in the coal mines nearly eight and one-half years. He wants to know whether your own experience is of value to you in the ministry, and how it is possible for others to get that value.

Answer: My ancestors were miners; that is, they chartered mines and operated them for three hundred years. For one hundred of those years they were preachers also. My father was a preacher for fifty-six years, and my grandfather for forty years before him. My ancestors combined mining in the district portrayed in *The Old Curiosity Shop* with preaching. That part of the country made familiar to you by the genius of Dickens in *The Old Curiosity Shop* is near my

native place. I went into the mines with my father when I was eleven and a half years old, and won my scholarship for college training while I was there. To be sure, I was the son of the master, but I had to keep up my end. And in the mines I was introduced to some of the choicest masterpieces of literature. I forgot my surroundings while I read Macaulay's vibrant prose, and the lilt of Tennyson's music. I am proud of my relation to those people. I learned from them as from none other the nobility of manual work and the worth of the upright man. Any man who has ten thousand pounds can be a duke in Britain. But when it comes to the real Britain—this descends unbroken from the days of Alfred in the toiling peasantry. I would rather have my experience with those men than any other part of my training for the ministry, for it gave access to the human heart.

Question: Has a theological seminary a right to offer such training as would prepare its men for teaching, and then to expect them to go out as flexibly educated pastors?

Answer: That is an awkward question to put to me in the presence of students from the theological seminary. I should say that there are enough elective courses in seminaries here and elsewhere to enable a man to decide for himself what particular line of study he should follow. But I am not at all sure that it is wise that he should do so. I was trained in a Methodist

college by one of the finest New Testament scholars in Europe and one of the best educated men I ever met. They told you what you were to study, and you had to master those studies. It was a hard test, but those who survived it proved efficient. Sometimes I think with all respect to him, that we consult the student too freely. It is possible that we would get better results for the business of life if he followed the counsel with those who are older than himself. Of course every man gets his own education, and the college and seminary can simply help him in the process. Therefore those in charge sometimes understand what he ought to do better than he does himself.

Question: Where should the major emphasis be placed in theological training?

Answer: If you train for a Jewish rabbi, on the moral sovereignty of God, the ethical standards of the prophets, and the rule of right attested by every man's conscience; if you are training for the Christian ministry, upon Jesus Christ as the absolute and final revelation of God; if you are preparing for the Catholic priesthood, you will train in the sacramental manner. The object varies according to the ministry for which you are preparing.

Question: From the sermonic point of view, is the blood element of the cross necessary? It seems to be displeasing to many folks. Are they justified?

Answer: I would drop that word "folks." I have noticed that the great masters of English pulpit eloquence have never had to lower their standards to suit their audiences. Spurgeon, John Bright and Lincoln used the best language, to the complete satisfaction of their audiences. The careless use of the sacred metaphor "the blood" has at times bred repulsion. It should not be mentioned except in terms which encompass it with an atmosphere of tenderness and reverence. There are great words in every language which should be thought of rather than spoken. In its ancient usage blood meant the life. So understood it can be used without any sense of dissonance upon the audience.

Question: As Protestants do we have more in common with Judaism or with Romanism?

Answer: Why not put it the other way around, and say "How much have we in common with both?" A great deal. To the Jew we owe the basic idea of God, the most marvelous achievement of the human mind under divine inspiration; also our forms of penitence and praise of social worship; and the great solemnities. The ethical standards of Israel's prophets, which have never been surpassed, are those on which our Lord based his teachings so far as righteousness is concerned.

Doctor Workman says that for seven hundred years the Roman Catholic Church, headed by the papacy, was the sole defense and refuge of Christian literature and of the Christian ideal, and that

but for that defense and refuge the ideas of God's Fatherhood and Christian oneness might have perished from the earth. We are debtors both to the Jew and to the Catholic.

Question: It was said in one of our lectures that intelligence tests have proved worthless. If we discard such scientific methods, how shall we proceed to understand the intellectual background and the faculties of the child?

Answer: I am not qualified to answer that question. Preaching and teaching are different vocations. I should hesitate to say what would be a correct judgment on intelligence tests. From common observation, minds which are alert on minute details are sometimes incapable of grasping large principles. One of the finest mathematicians I knew was one of the greatest simpletons in his class. Yet notable achievement in the way of mathematics caused him no effort. It is very seldom that you find any man with a mind which can at one and the same time weave the gossamer threads and forge the anchors of the mind. We are limited in our gifts, and if they are developed in one direction, we must pay the price in another. Tests vary according to the objects they have in view to ascertain. Many a man while in college makes a bad examinee and others far exceed him, yet he afterward goes from strength to strength, while the brilliant members of the group remain unfulfilled prophecies. That is not always the case however; Dean Stanley,

who in after life became so eminent, when at Rugby used to stagger from Doctor Arnold's desk beneath the weight of the books he had won as prizes; and the like is true of some others.

Question: Should the theological school insist on supervision of work done in our student charges? What about an apprenticeship for the minister, similar to that of interneship in hospitals?

Answer: If a student finds a place in a large parish under an experienced minister, this can serve as a postgraduate course. I think I should advise it since he can be taught certain things which otherwise he might not acquire so readily. I have known men to whom this pastoral experience for a couple of years after leaving the theological school has been very useful, and prepared them for their best work. Please read the first part of the question again. (This was done.) I should think you have enough supervision in Methodism. The student pastor has the oversight of his bishop, his district superintendent, presiding elder, and the free lance criticism of the Ladies' Aid Society, to say nothing of those elect saints who sit in judgment on him at the close of the service. How much more supervision does he want?

Question: We know that the early disciples of Jesus and our first Methodists were led and compelled by a driving faith. How can we be driven by such faith and yet in all our seeking keep an open mind for reason?

Answer: You do not obtain faith by mere reason, although it plays a part in the process. You obtain faith by simply throwing your entire nature on God; getting a result, and gambling on that—to use the language of the street. And the verifications of experience which follow justify such faith. I know no cause why faith should not be as great now as in the days of the New Testament. Any man who has strong and unfaltering faith in ideals, and labors to that end, displays the qualities displayed by the early church. While as Methodists we may not be as emotionally religious as our fathers were, yet so far as factual experience is concerned we are in advance of them. Indeed, we have made progress since 1914. Christianity was never so determined to display the Spirit of Christ toward Jew and Gentile without distinction as it is now. With the growing solidarity of the churches and the concentration of their means and purposes this spirit of union and fraternity will continue and prosper.

Think of the Conference at Stockholm in 1925. Think of the almost greater Conference at Lausanne in 1927. Think of the intervening Conferences at Winchester and again at Geneva. Think of the proposition made on the part of Christian men last August to invite in 1930 every religion of mankind to a convention where their representatives should present what are specific contributions of their respective historic faiths to

world order, peace, and brotherhood. If the banner of Christ is not advanced by such strategy as that, I wonder how it shall be advanced.

Question: Knowing the ministry as you do, would you advise a son to enter that profession?

Answer: I advised my own son to do it. I am very sorry that he had too much of his mother's modesty to attempt it. I wish he had gone into the ministry. Now I am entertaining hopes about his son. There has never been a generation in my family, for one hundred and fifty years, without a minister, and I do not want it to miss again. There is no higher position than that of the Christian minister, despite the embargo laid on it by the meanness of many Protestant churches, and by their inability to conceive of its nobility, and by the further fact that denominational disloyalty is too prevalent. If I respect the Roman Catholic Church for anything, it is for the loyalty of its members to their organization. This is not so characteristic of the Protestant people. I have heard professedly Christian men and women give the most ridiculous excuses for their absence from church. Sometimes the minister was too fat or too thin, or the children did not care for him! Think of this, ye gods! Such a state of things does not exist outside our various bodies. Jew and Protestant should cease finding fault with our Catholic neighbors and proceed to observe new standards of discipleship and loyalty among our own people.

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